

THE 20 BEST SMARTPHONES OF 2015

Stuff

WHAT'S NEXT

YOUR HOUSE IS ONLINE

...and it's about to become the greatest gadget of all

SURFACE BOOK

MICROSOFT'S WIN 10 PLANS HINGE ON IT



November 2015
Middle East Edition
A Motivate Publication

BD150 JD3 KD120 R0150
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Dubai Technology and Media Free Zone

PLUS

WIN JABRA SPORT
COACH EARBUDS
IPHONE 6S TESTED
FIFA 16 VS PES 2016
SONY'S SLIM TV

Dell recommends Windows.



It leaves room for everything except the competition.

Sure, being the world's smallest 13" laptop looks impressive, but its size is just the beginning. With the world's first virtually borderless infinity display, available with UltraSharp™ QHD+ resolution, configured using an Intel® Core™ i7 processor, Windows 8.1, up to 15 hours of battery life* and built with carbon fiber and machined aluminum, the new XPS 13 is amazing both inside and out. Which is great news for everybody — unless you're the competition.

The new Dell XPS 13. Better by any measure.



*Battery Life based on BrowsingBench test run by Dell in November, 2014. Visit www.eembc.org for more information. System had 150-nits (40%) brightness, WiFi on, 4GB memory, Intel® HD 5500 graphics, Intel® Core™ i5 processor, 128GB SSD and FHD display. Test results should be used only to compare one product to another and are not a guarantee you will get the same battery life, which may be significantly less than test results and varies depending on product configuration, software, usage, operating conditions, power management settings and other factors. Maximum battery life decreases with time and use. Dell XPS 13 is a trademark of Dell Inc. Intel, the Intel Logo, Intel Inside, Intel Core, and Core Inside are trademarks of Intel Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries. Dell, the Dell logo and the Dell badge are trademarks of Dell Inc. ©2014 Dell Inc. All rights reserved.

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WELCOME



Your home is on the cusp of becoming sentient. Well, not sentient (that would be crazy talk), but certainly a lot smarter than it ever has been. This isn't just about the 'smarthome', the 'internet of toasters', or whatever you want to call it. There is a sea change coming, and it's going to impact the very nature of our dwellings. Technology has always been something that we've used, I'd argue, since the very first primate picked up a stick to extract a tasty-looking beetle-larva from a rotting log (eww). But now we've reached the stage where gadgets are finally using themselves.

I first noticed this late last year, when I started using smart lightbulbs. After the initial honeymoon period of prodding at my smartphone to slather my room in fluoro-green whilst watching old *Swamp Thing* reruns, or activating 'disco-mode' every time a *Jungle* song came on the stereo, I've left them to their own devices (if you'll pardon the pun), and they've since started to adapt to my comings and goings, using a lot less energy in the process. Like everything from our ancestor's grub-twig to your new superphone (p38), they're just tools, the only difference is these tools now work on their own. And this is just the start, eventually every tool you own will be increasingly more like that: more self-using, more independent, and more, oh dear I see where this is going...

I guess I spoke too soon. It looks like a future run by maniac robot overlords who hunt us for sport is inevitable. Oh well, best to just set the robot vacuum to auto, have the Wi-Fi enabled coffee machine make you a mechacchino, and enjoy your robo-home while you still can. Enjoy the mag. 

Mike Priest, Editor / mike@motivate.ae / @MikePriest



THIS MONTH IN STUFF'S DIGITAL EDITION

- Expert digital reviews on all of the reviews inside this magazine
- All-new features and tests designed just for iPad
- Stunning hi-res photos of the hottest tech
- Spiritual fulfilment

WHAT'S HAPPENING ONLINE?

- Up to the minute news and views on everything from Apple to Adidas
- Exclusive video reviews, previews, trailers and gadget challenges
- More games! The latest titles reviewed in full, with in-game galleries and more

JUSTICE JOSLIN

PEACE
+ LOVE

GAP

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11.15



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 - Give your Mac Bluetooth surround sound
 - Listen to gigs before they happen
 - Stalk your local songbirds



WIN!
p25

TOP 10 OF EVERYTHING

Looking to buy something but need a bit of advice? Turn to our *Stuff* Top 10s: our expert listings of all gadgetry, from p63

SMARTPHONES



OnePlus 2
★★★★★
Flagship killer
p64

TABLETS



Samsung Galaxy Tab S2 9.7
★★★★★
Sammy's slim new slab
p65

OUR PRICES

Prices in Hot *Stuff* are RRP's. Prices in features, tests and Top 10s are the best we could find from a reputable online retailer at the time of going to print.

VANS

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 13

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VANS

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AND MUCH MORE

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partyinthepark.ae



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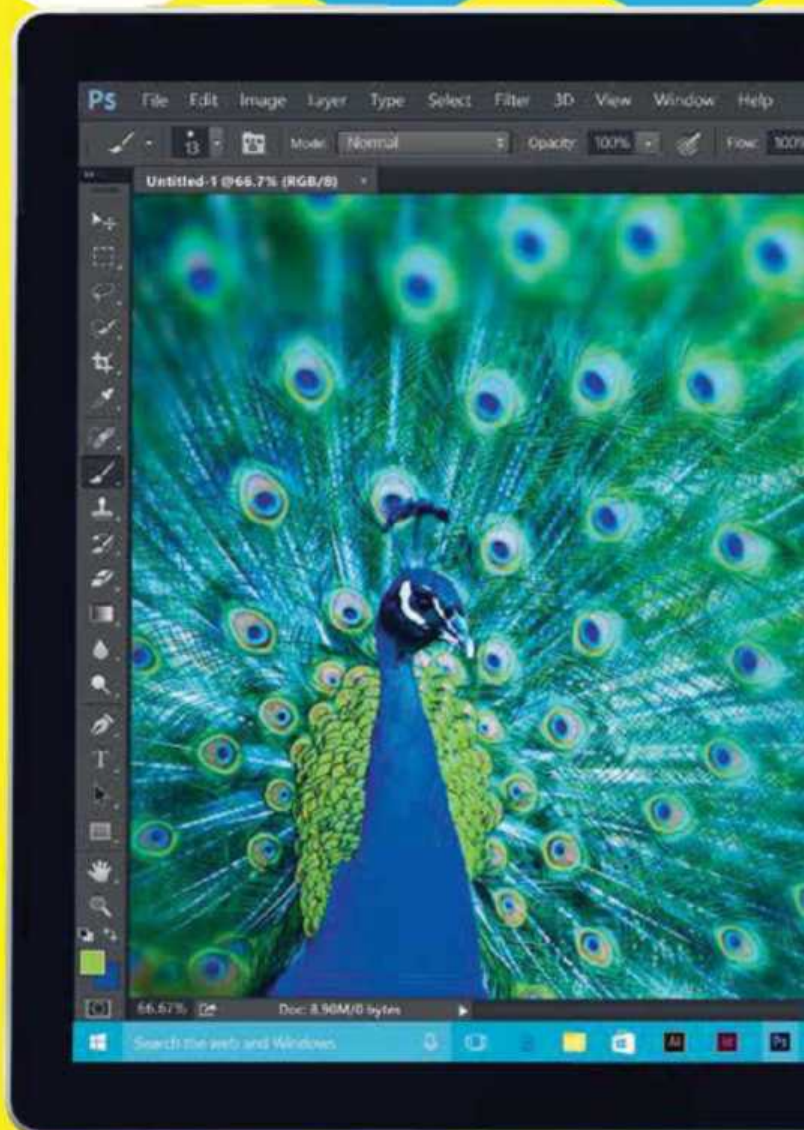
HOT
FOUR
#1

CORTANA'S SHINY NEW CONVERTIBLE

Microsoft Surface Book

It's strange to think that, despite having spent decades as one of the world's largest and most valuable tech companies, Microsoft has just made its first laptop. In the past, companies like Lenovo and HP made the screens and keys while Microsoft made what was seen and typed into and clicked on. But after a faltering start, Microsoft's Surface tablets turned out to be actually pretty good, and then — with last year's Surface Pro 3 — really very good indeed. Which is why we're really very excited about the Surface Book. Its 267ppi, 13.5in display is sharper than a MacBook Pro Retina, and it contains the sixth-gen Intel Core processor and battery it needs to work on its own as a tablet. The keyboard, though, is no mere peripheral. It contains powerful graphics hardware and yet more battery, enabling the conjoined pair — held together by 'Muscle Wire' locks — to work for 12 hours or more. A bendy 'dynamic fulcrum' hinge lets you fold the screen back on the keyboard, and you can draw or write with precision on the screen using the Surface Pen.

As hot as... **throbbing Muscle Wire**
from **US\$1500 / microsoft.com**



U

F

F

15 PAGES
OF THE BIGGEST
STORIES FROM
PLANET TECH



MORE MICRO-MANIA



MICROSOFT LUMIA 950/950 XL

Both these Windows 10 phones
have 2560x1440 displays,
20MP cameras, 3GB RAM and
32GB storage plus microSD.

US\$749



MICROSOFT SURFACE PRO 4

The newest Surface gets a
fingerprint sensor, Windows 10,
larger screen, thinner chassis
and more sensitive Pen stylus.

from US\$900



MICROSOFT BAND 2

With Win 10 softening the
hearts of naysayers, there'll be
demand for this in-ecosystem
fitness tracker, with a comfy
curved screen and barometer.

US\$250





Wristy business

The Pebble Time Round comes in preconfigured colour combos of 14mm or 20mm strap widths. Gold, silver and black metal straps are "on the way".

HOT THREE #2

WHAT OLD FATHER TIME GIVES TO LITTLE DAUGHTER TIME Pebble Time Round

Imagine one hundredth of a Labrador, rolled flat and wrapped around your wrist. Horrific. But there's only one better way to experience the feeling of a smartwatch that weighs just 28g, and that's to try that watch for yourself. That watch is the new Pebble Time Round. It takes Pebble's familiar colour e-paper display, makes it round and attaches it to a thin, round watch – one with a choice of strap widths, and a rose gold colour option that highlights it as very much One For The Ladies. Pebble's oft-heralded week-plus battery life takes a hit in the featherweight Round, but it'll still last two days and it has a new 15min quick charge feature that'll give you a day's watchiness in the time it takes you heat up and inhale a breakfast Rustlers.

Ashot as... a microwaved sausage
US\$250 / pebble.com

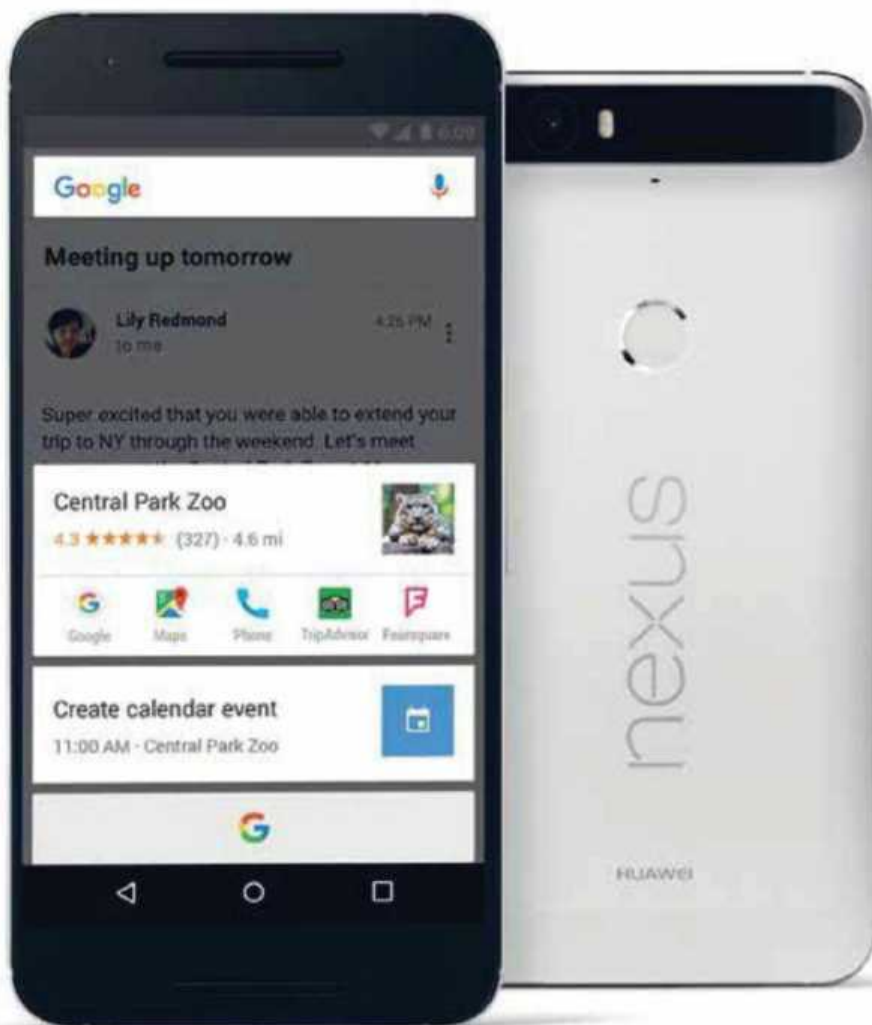
HOT
THREE
#3YOU HAVE
PERMISSION TO
BE AWESOMISED

Google Android 6.0

Amazingly enough, the revelation that the 'M' in 'Android M' is to be 'Marshmallow' isn't the most exciting bit of the new OS launch. Well, it was temporarily, but as of now we're more interested in what the new OS will bring. And the answer is many things. There are mildly obvious upgrades, like homescreen rotation and the virtual plumbing for Android Pay using any device's fingerprint scanner. There are geeky love-ins, like the process of accepting or declining individual access permissions on an app-by-app basis (sounds dull, but it gives you power over the likes of Facebook so, uh, yep).

Then there are things that caused a murmur: apps and their data backing up automatically to Google Drive? Hmm. But as with most OS upgrades, it'll be the things you don't see that will make a big difference. Like the death of the 'Open in...' rigmarole, or seamless in-app Chrome tabs with full security and autofill. You'll just be happier with your phone, without really knowing why.

Ashot as... a horizontal homescreen on your nightstand
[US\\$free / android.com](#)



OH, THERE'S HARDWARE ALRIGHT



NEXUS 5X

LG's latest Android task was a follow-up to the Nexus 5. The specs are lower, but so is the price. So, plastic body, 5.2in 1080p screen, hexa-core Snapdragon 808. But it gets a fingerprint sensor and Marshmallow from the get-go.
[from US\\$379 \(16GB\) / lg.com](#)



PIXEL C

Google's new supertab has a 10in 2K screen, an Nvidia Tegra X1 processor and USB-C. A funky US\$150 keyboard dock puts this squarely in opposition to Apple's new iPad Pro, which will go on sale around the same time.
[from US\\$500 / pixel.google.com](#)



NEXUS 6P

Huawei is your hardware partner for the bigger and more upmarket of the two new Nexuses. The body is aluminium, the 5.7in screen is 2K, the processor is Snapdragon 810 and the RAM is 3GB. Pretty, pretty fancy.
[from US\\$499 \(32GB\) / huawei.com](#)

SAFE AND FAST? X MARKS THE SPOT

Tesla Model X

US\$75k (due 2016) / teslamotors.com

The back doors only need 30cm of clearance to open. The driver's door also opens automatically when it senses you.



The groovy Falcon rear doors made it from concept to production, but will the Model X fly?

● **It won't fly.**

Elon Musk has manfully resisted the temptation to cross-pollinate the Model X SUV with his spaceship company SpaceX. Instead he seems hell-bent on being level-headed. Those sci-fi doors, which sense their surroundings and hinge open accordingly, are engineered for ease of access, not style. The wide, tall aperture they create simplifies getting babies (Musk rats?) into child seats, while still getting adults into some of the other seven. The Model X will be safer than any big combustion engine SUVs, says Tesla, because of the lack of lump under the bonnet.

● **But it will be exciting.**

Strapped in your fam? Good, because like the Tesla Model S,

the X is built on a base of batteries and boost: 0-62mph in less than five seconds for the base 90D, dropping to a headline-grabbing 3.2secs in the more powerful P90D. The figures are remarkable given that the Model X is a very heavy, very big car. But less remarkable if you know about electric motor torque and, given the SUV pretensions, the standard all-wheel drive. Range is likely to be about 400km and, with a growing number of Superchargers globally, you'll have noticed a distinct lack of dead Teslas in the news.

● **...and geeky.**

The 17in touchscreen of the Model S is inside, hurrah, and there's the expected cornucopia of steering assistance, braking assistance, parking assistance, etc. Unusually large HEPA air filters promise "hospital levels of cleanliness", say Tesla. By which, hopefully, it means like an operating theatre, not an A&E waiting room on a Friday night.

0-62MPH IN 3.2 SECONDS IS REMARKABLE GIVEN THAT THIS IS A VERY HEAVY, VERY BIG CAR

MY OTHER CAR'S A...



● **Honda 2&4**

Looks like what Optimus Prime might blow out of his nose. An open-to-the-elements 405kg Ariel Atom rival, born out of a Honda internal competition to design a four-wheeler around the engine from a MotoGP bike. **US\$75k / honda.com**



● **Porsche Mission E**

Porsche's first all-electric supercar. Using tech from the Le Mans-winning 919 and the 918 Spyder road car hybrid, the Mission E claims 0-62mph in 3.5secs, 600bhp and a range of over 480 kilometres. **US\$75k (concept) / porsche.com**

SONY

SPECTRE

007

IN CINEMAS NOVEMBER

Made for Bond

XPERIA Z5 Dual

with fast autofocus
and low-light technology

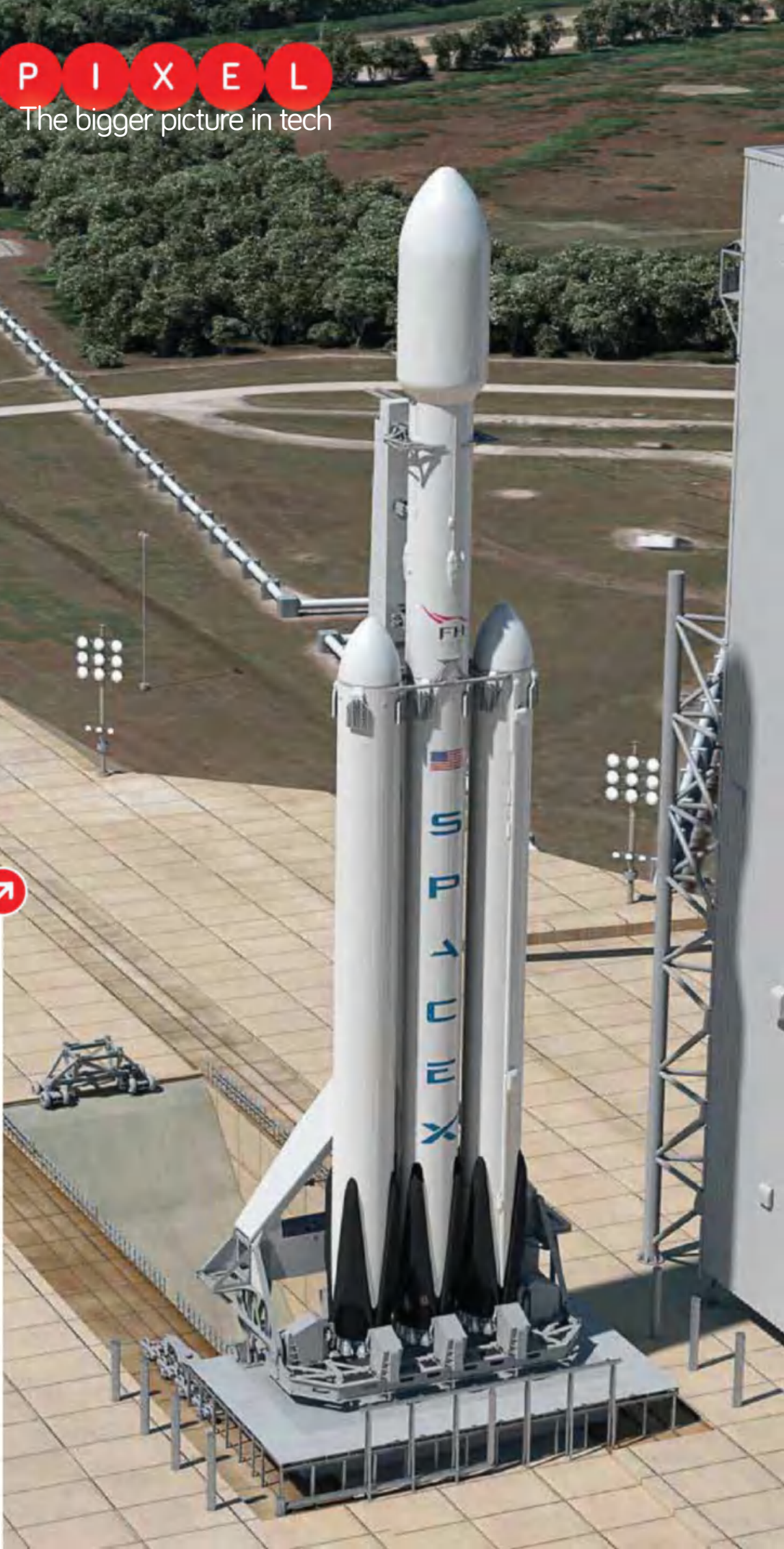


Promotion begins 25th September 2015 and ends 29th April 2016. Xperia Z5 devices only. Mobile operator plan and costs not included. SPECTRE, 007 and related James Bond Trademarks ©1962-2015 Danjaq, LLC and United Artists Corporation. SPECTRE, 007 and related James Bond Trademarks are trademarks of Danjaq, LLC. All Rights Reserved. Icons and images are simulated and are for illustrative purposes only. Sony is a trademark or registered trademark of Sony Corporation. Android, Google Chrome and Google Play are trademarks of Google Inc. Other product and company names mentioned herein may be the trademarks of their respective owners. Any rights not expressly granted herein are reserved. All terms are subject to change without prior notice. Additional information regarding Sony trademarks may be located on our website at: www.sonymobile.com/global-en/legal/trademarks-and-copyright/ ©2015 Sony Mobile Communications Inc.



WE MUSK GET UP THERE

Last century humanity had itself a lovely time, firing all sorts of things into space to see what would happen. Then someone realised that the rockets had burnt through all of the money. So mankind had to cut back on its orbital fun, until eccentric money-titan Elon Musk decided that, while rockets burn money at an alarming rate, they can also *make* money. Hence SpaceX, the first private space company, and the spring 2016 launch of the 53,000kg-payload Falcon Heavy, the biggest rocket since beasts like the mighty Saturn V (inset pic) were retired. Whee! What to put in it?





NEWS FEED

**MORPHEUS IS GONE**

Sony has renamed its Project Morpheus headset as PlayStation VR. A none-more-Japanese launch vid shows gamers piloting giant mech warriors, cooling at beautiful fish and dancing to J-pop. PS VR is likely to launch before Oculus Rift, though the exact date is not yet known.

**ANDROID WEAR WORKS ON IPHONES**

Google has released an app on the iOS App Store that lets you pair Android Wear watches with your iPhone. The Huawei Watch, Asus ZenWatch 2 and LG Watch Urbane will all sync, although — as with Gmail and Google's other iOS apps — they'll work better with an Android.

**TWEET THE ROOF**

Rugby World Cup fans and/or AV geeks Segwayed to The O2 in London last month to see its domed roof convert into an England-supporting 3D projection. Using a total of 68 projectors and 144 lights, fans had their tweets shown using the hashtag #WearTheRose.

START MENU

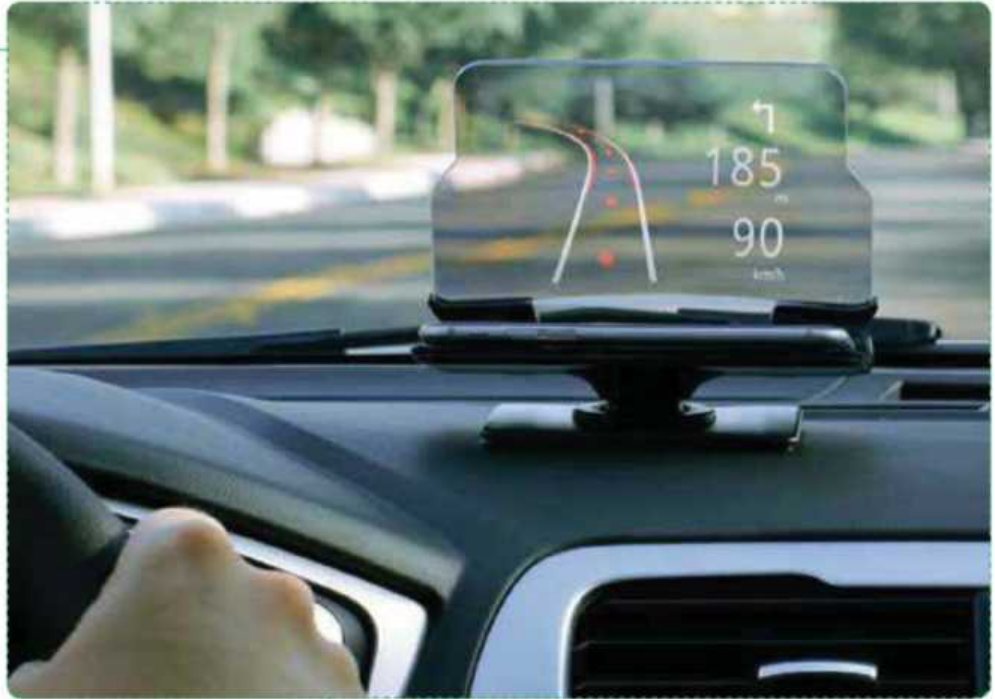
The latest startups, crowdfunded projects and plain crazy ideas

KICK-STARTER

Good reflections HUDWAY GLASS

The Hudway Glass is a highly affordable heads-up display for your car. Instead of adding another layer of tech – like Garmin's electronic heads-up device – it just uses ol' mother physics. You put your phone on the Glass's slip-free tray, where it reflects off the panel above. Simple. The company is coding a sat-nav app and an informatics app to use with it. (You can't, of course, just use any sat-nav app because it needs to be mirror-reversed on the phone screen.) To be honest, though, our favourite thing about this is that it forces you to put your phone away up front where it can't distract you from driving.

US\$50 / hudwayglass.com



BACK IT

STACK IT

SACK IT

KICK-STARTER

INDIE-GOGO

KICK-STARTER

KICK-STARTER



Hey, cool tent SIESTA4

Tents aren't best suited to festivals, really. No bathroom. But mainly because, once the sun comes up (ie: the time for festival goers to go to sleep), they quickly become too bright and hot. The Siesta4 has heat- and light-reflecting material, plus USB-powered fans. Bit pricey and vandal-attracting for a party tent, though.

from \$315 / outbacklogic.com



The necks big thing TINSEL

If you're a tech company and you want women to hate you, it's easy: just roll out a smaller, pinker version of a device you already make, and call it the Girl Edition. These wired Tinsel earphones are a more subtle sell: when not in use, they click together into a necklace. Which is pretty cool, if you like wearing the same necklace every day.

from \$150 / tinsel.me



Layering schmayering RAVEAN C6 HEATED JACKETS

Ravean are railing against the idea that heated jackets are bulky and inefficient. Which is quite a mountain to climb. But its heated hoodie, down jacket and gloves do look pretty snazzy, with 5V or 12V heating options and phone charging from the same battery. Hefty pre-order discounts, too.

from \$90 / ravean.com



Gram slam WEIGH TO FLY

At first glance, this might be shopping channel tat. But bear with us. It's a luggage scale that you place under your suitcase, showing a readout on your phone as you pack, including itself in the sums. It doubles as a clothes hanger and triples as a proximity alarm in case you walk away without your case. Come on! Useful, no?

£70 / weigh-to-fly

BOSE

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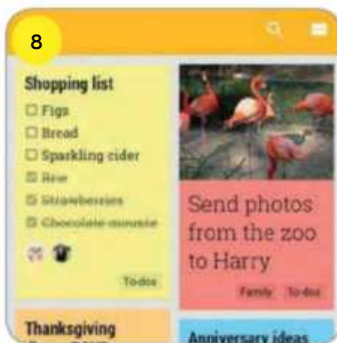
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©2015 Bose Corporation.

This month's mobile must-downloads



1 Mini Motor Racing WRT

US\$free / iOS, Android

Ah, *Micro Machines*, how fondly we remember thee! Although, looking back at screenshots from the '90s, you were a bit rubbish. We'll take this modern top-down racer instead, even with its freemium nonsense.

2 AmpMe

US\$free / iOS, Android

Here's an intriguing idea. AmpMe lets you group together the tinny speakers on several smartphones to make one synced tinny cacophony. It only works with SoundCloud; more services to follow.

3 BlockQuest

US\$free / iOS, Android

A familiar graphics style – *Crossy Road*, anyone? – doesn't detract from this being a madcap RPGer. Not one for turn-based strategists, though: you're moving and puzzle-solving against the clock.

4 Mozilla Firefox

US\$free / Android

The latest Firefox for Android adds a couple of niceties like improved tabs and bookmark management as well as multi-platform sync. In the next update, we're promised unrivalled privacy settings.

5 Pac-Man Bounce

US\$free / iOS, Android

Our beloved pixel-muncher is kind of borrowed for this only slightly *Pac-Man* puzzler. Align the bounce pads to make him change direction, clearing each level of stars while avoiding mishaps and miscreants.

6 Steller

US\$free / iOS

If lobbing a bunch of photos onto Facebook doesn't feel like enough narrative of your trip, Steller is an app that lets you quickly create an onscreen photobook. The new version is streamlined and tweaked.

7 Murder

US\$free / iOS, Android

We're looking forward to playing this cyberpunk point-and-click adventure. It's set in Tokyo so we should probably stop pronouncing it 'moider' like we're some kind of noirish New York detective. Moider.

8 Google Keep

US\$free / iOS

Imagine 'Wait for iOS version' was a to-do list item in our Android phone's Google Keep app. And now imagine us prodding the check box... on an iOS device! Done. (Why do we have two phones?)

9 Dead Zone: Zombie War Deluxe

US\$free / Android

You're going to have to be an awfully big fan of zombie games to endure the painfully translated text of this undead-flummoxing strategy romp.

NOT JUST AN APP

iRIG KEYS

from €130 / iOS, Android, PC, Mac



There are so few on-the-move opportunities for sparkly-fingered ivory-ticklers.

Unless, of course, you routinely travel with a piano, which must get to be a real bore after a while. Our friends at IK Multimedia, fortunately, continue to persevere at their lot in life, which is the easy connection of musical instruments to phones and tablets. (They, you'll recall, are the makers of the iRIG guitar adaptor.) And now they've re-released the iRIG Keys (€130) and iRIG Keys Pro (€150) portable controller keyboards. Both now come with an Android-compatible microUSB-OTG cable, giving you yet more ways to roll out your heartstring-twangling version of *Candle in The Wind*.



BEST OF

HP'S PREMIUM WINDOWS 10 DEVICES

Last month in Barcelona, HP announced a slew of gorgeously designed premium devices, all powered by Windows 10. Here are our three favorites

THE FUTURISTIC ONE

HP Envy Curved All-In-One PC

At a huge 34 inches of curved-screen goodness, this all-in-one PC is designed to appeal to productivity fiends and gamers alike. It houses a new Intel i5 or i7 Skylake processor, an optional Nvidia GTX 960 GPU for gaming or video editing and six front-facing speakers powered by B&O tech. Its futuristic shape makes you feel like you're looking at it straight on, even as you turn your head to look at the other side of the screen.

from **US\$1800** / hp.com

THE STYLISH ONE



HP Spectre X2

HP's Microsoft Surface Pro-like tablet/laptop hybrid is a 12in 1080p tablet with a detachable keyboard and a hollow adjustable kickstand made of stainless steel to give extra lap-propping powers.

Decked out with Intel's new Skylake Core M processor, 8GB RAM and a 512GB SSD, this rests it right between the Surface Pro and Surface Book in terms of power, which is not a bad place to be.

from **US\$800** / hp.com

THE PORTABLE ONE



HP Envy 8 Note

While an 8in tablet with a 10in keyboard dock may sound preposterous, HP have managed to pull it off. The Full HD slab is only 7.7mm thick and slots into a recess on the underside of the 'Keyboard Folio' when not in use. A Wacom stylus comes bundled with the tablet for those that prefer to take notes in a more traditional fashion and has an integrated menu that works alongside Windows 10's touch interface.

from **US\$330** / hp.com



DUE
FEB

FIRST LOOK FAR CRY PRIMAL PS4, Xbox One, PC

In recent years, the *Far Cry* series has done a fine job of taking gamers on semi-regular holidays to tropical locations. Sure, you often find yourself fighting off vicious honey badgers with your bare hands, or accidentally joining an armed rebellion against a warlord, but that's just part of living like a local, right?

But Ubisoft's latest excursion isn't just in a different continent, it takes place in an entirely different time. *Primal* is set in the Mesolithic period of around 10,000BC, where it's sabretooth

tigers and woolly mammoths you have to worry about, not some pesky woodland critter (although admittedly one with a very bad temper).

That means your position on the food chain is far more precarious than normal, as you'll have to hunt to survive, using whatever primitive weaponry you can craft from foraged wood, stones and bits of old bone. It's a long way from the rocket launchers you used to conquer Kyrat in *FC4*.

You play as Takkar, the only surviving member of a clan,

which makes you an easy target for other tribes looking to nick all the stuff you've hoarded.

If previous *Far Cry* games are anything to go by, you'll probably find yourself dabbling in the supernatural, although with the internal combustion engine and even the bicycle still a few thousand years from being invented, it'll be interesting to see how Ubisoft deals with traversing the land of Oros's high peaks and vast forests without vehicular assistance. But then that's all in a day's work for a Stone Age homo sapiens.



FIRST PLAY

DARK SOULS 3

PS4, Xbox One, PC

Good news for masochists: punishing RPG *Dark Souls* is back for another instalment of teeth-grashing swordplay – and we've been hacking (and dying) our way through a few of its notoriously tough baddies.

The classic gameplay – block, dodge, slash, die – has had a few tweaks. Heavy attacks now land more quickly, making them more viable and ever so slightly lowering the skill bar – but that's not to say every encounter won't put you through the wringer.

What will be welcome for less adept players is the way it rewards experimentation. After repeatedly being skewered like an armour-clad kebab by a nasty knight, leading him into the path of a fire-breathing dragon proved vital in disposing of him, as did attacking a demon mid-transformation. Whether the same lateral thinking works against the bosses remains to be seen.

In spite of the thorough pasting received during our time with it, *Dark Souls 3* is shaping up to be a very satisfying mountain to climb – as long as you're prepared to die over and over and over again.



[Words: Justin Hall; Images: From Dark Souls 3]

CAMPAIGNING FOR YOUR KICKSTARTER CASH



HOME FREE PS4, PC, MAC

Recent simulator games have allowed us to experience life as a goat, a rock and a slice of bread, but the one we've all been clamouring for is finally coming. *Home Free* is a stray dog sim. You can steal food from humans, do tricks to impress them, forage in bins in procedurally generated streets, and fight for territory with other hounds.



TOP SECRET EMAIL

Edward Snowden's exposure of the NSA's spying isn't the first thing you'd think to make a game about, but then you could've said the same about passport control and look at *Papers, Please*. *Top Secret* involves you sending actual emails in real time, in an attempt to find out who's leaking documents to the press.



FRIDAY THE 13TH

PS4, XBOX ONE, PC

This has been given a Hollywood boost by snaring the official licence to feature iconic movie baddie Jason Voorhees. You'll play as either the madman himself, or one of the seven naive teens he's trying to turn into mincemeat, in *Evolve*-style multiplayer chases around Camp Crystal Lake.



INCOMING

JANUARY

● LEGO MARVEL'S AVENGERS

FEBRUARY

● BATTLEBORN

● MIRROR'S EDGE CATALYST

● DEUS EX: MANKIND DIVIDED

● XCOM 2

MARCH

● TOM CLANCY'S THE DIVISION

● UNCHARTED 4: A THIEF'S END

BACKPACKS

Flapjacks. In backpacks.
Are coming down
the stairs...

1 Reef Diamond Tail III

Leaving your wet swim kit in a poly bag for your mum to deal with – those days are sadly past. Thankfully, this travel-tough Reef ruckie has a dedicated wet area, complete with drainage.

US\$84 / reef.com

2 EvocFR Trail Team

The human spine faces the wrong way, so it's the last to know when you're about to hit something hard. Thankfully, this mountain bikers' bag also has a CE-certified back protector built in.

US\$170 / evocsports.com

3 Patagonia Lightweight Travel Tote Pack

Made of super-light fabric, the Travel Tote can still fold out its tiny pocket into a rucksack or twin-handled tote bag.

US\$80 / patagonia.com

4 Crumpler Light Delight Folding Camera Bag

With a cheer and a jig and a hey zippy zip, this Crumpler transforms from a padded camera waistbag to a rucksack.

US\$110 / crumpler.eu

5 Vulpine Laptop Commuter Backpack

Is it possible to focus on true minimalism? Can you try really hard to not include fussy details? Either way, only a laptop sleeve and key clip made the cut here.

US\$230 / vulpine.cc

6 Rapha Backpack in Chilli

The Rapha Backpack justifies its pricetag with loads of neat touches and details. If the Chilli colour is too garish for you, it also comes in blue and black.

US\$170 / rapha.cc





Four legs good again SAMSUNG SERIF

The other night, when you woke up for seemingly no good reason... it was the globe-spanning 'crunk' of a completed revolution. The moment when tellies went from boxes on legs to tabletop stands to wall-mounted slivers and now back to boxes on legs. Samsung's new Serif TV, co-created by French designers Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec, is destined to stand on its own four legs and serve as a definite object in the room. You can even, horror of horrors, put things on top of it. There'll be three models – a 4K 40in, a 1080p 32in and a 720p 24in – and if you were to put us in a corner and force an opinion out of us, we'd have to say that we rather like it.

from US\$770 (preorder) / samsung.com

The Iron 883 benefits from a new rolled leather seat: comfortable rebellion for all.



A bike called dignity HARLEY-DAVIDSON IRON 883

'Mid-life crisis' is the phrase that leaps to the lips of people upon hearing that you've bought a Harley-Davidson. We disagree. A mid-life crisis would be submitting yourself to the arrogant salesmen and cackling groupies in the showrooms of Ducati, Yamaha and Honda. H-D shop staff, on the other hand, are more likely to treat you with some dignity, knowing that you're just a normal person who wants to get some flies on your teeth. And while Harleys can be pricey, this entry-level Iron gets new adjustable suspension and lighter wheels for 2016, with bags of character for not much cash. To hell with the naysayers.

from US\$8400 / harley-davidson.com



? WTF IS THE LIGHT L16?

Must. Find. Pattern.

Annoying, isn't it? You probably spotted pretty quickly that those are camera lenses, but before your modern brain even asked why there are so many of them, your primal brain cried out at the randomness of their placement. And then your modern brain said it's something to do with how it works. And then this other brain, put there by the government, suggested it's to do with their physical layout on the device's PCB. And you were like, *who said that?*

Quite. So why all the lenses?

Sixteen! The aim of the L16 is to capture DSLR-like quality photos, but in a form factor that can easily slip into your pocket. The lenses have different focal lengths from 35mm to 150mm. Combined into one shot by clever software, the resulting image is a whopping 52MP of detail; but cleverer yet is the ability to change the focus point of the image, Lytro-style.

They all look quite tiny, though.

Low-light shooting is also taken care of by the software, which decides the best combination of lenses for the light reading and sorts the final exposure using wizardry. At this point, camera purists will be screaming their safe word and running for their lens cupboard just to be reassured by some big bits of light-loving glass.

Yeah, the L16's probably not for those guys.

No, indeed – a point further reinforced by the device's lack of physical controls. Only the shutter release button is 'real'. Everything else is handled by the on-screen touchscreen controls. It must be the devil's work.

So, DSLR quality claimed. DSLR price demanded?

Yep. Early birds can reserve one for US\$1300 until 6 November, after which the price will shoot up to US\$1700. It won't be out until next summer, mind you, so if you're probably in the 'many lenses do not make light work' camp, it might be safer to wait for the reviews.



YOUR MONTH NOV

Remember, remember, the fifth of November. And these dates too...



3

THE BAZAAR OF BAD DREAMS

Stephen King
If, like us, you find that full-length horror fiction winds you up into an unapproachable jitterbomb, then a sessionable short stories collection such as this might be manageable. Begin. No? Aieee! Finish. Reset.



13

PARTY IN THE PARK

Dubai Media City Ampitheatre, Dubai
If, like us, you're a fan of spending the day (now that the weather's cooled down) watching the likes of Stereophonics and Razorlight belt out your favourite tunes from a decade ago then you're in for a treat.



15

ATP WORLD TOUR FINALS

See Djokovic and Murray lock horns in a weatherproof O2 Arena tennis mega-event, and be happy... if, like us, you feel that the poshness of Wimbledon is de-dignified by all-night ticket queues and rain.



19

THE SANDMAN: OVERTURE DELUXE EDITION

Neil Gaiman, JH Williams III
Do you perennially forget that you like graphic novels? Try this collected edition of the new *Sandman*: Overture prequel series... if, not like us, you can recall the original *Sandman* plots.



27

BRIDGE OF SPIES

Shot down over enemy lines — we've all been there. But this Spielberg-directed true story about the 1960s U-2 affair — scripted by the Coen brothers — is worth watching if, like us, you like to see how other people dealt with it.



30

MARVEL'S AGENT CARTER

If, like us, you somehow missed the memo about this retro spin-off of the *Avengers* spin-off *Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.*, be not dismayed. Just order up the Blu-ray and try your best to remember who's who, where and what.



WIN! A PAIR OF JABRA SPORT COACH WIRELESS EARBUDS

We get it, it's tough enough finding the motivation to hit the gym only to spend the subsequent 45 minutes getting barked at by a personal trainer. Jabra's looking to change that by letting you skip the awkward human interaction (who needs those meaty flesh bags anyway?) by designing a workout suited to you on the Jabra Sport Life app that then you can follow to the letter thanks to in-ear audio coaching. That means no more passive-aggressive comments about having two cheat meals this week, no more snarky jabs directed towards your poor burpee form, just pure, clinical robo-fitness advice peppered in amongst your workout jams, pumped out in Premium Dolby sound quality, we might add.

These Bluetooth earbuds also incorporate Jabra's TrackFit motion sensor to help log every rep, set and circuit you can muster, giving you a detailed overview of your workout that you can then review after you're all done and sweaty. Hey, we never said the Jabra Sport Coach was going to make getting fit easy, just easier. Now get thee to a gym.

For a chance to win a pair of Jabra Sport Coach wireless earbuds go to stuff.tv/me/win and answer this simple question:

HURRY!
COMPETITION
CLOSES ON
NOV 1

**WHAT IS THE NAME OF
THE JABRA SPORT COACH
COMPANION APP?**

- A** Jabra Couch Sitting
- B** Jabra Fit Time
- C** Jabra Sport Life

For more info visit jabra.com

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All entries to be submitted by November 1, 2015. The prizes are as stated and no cash alternative is available. Prizes are non-transferable. The decision of Motivate Publishing is final and no correspondence will be entered into. For full terms and conditions see: www.stuff.tv/me/terms-and-conditions-me

HOME IS WHERE THE SMART IS

Gadgeteers have been talking about connected, automated homes for a long time, but – as wireless connectivity becomes cheap and ubiquitous – the smarthome is at long last taking shape. Join us on a tour of the home of the very near, very cool future

FRONT DOOR



AUGUST
SMART LOCK
US\$250 /
august.com

August's Smart Lock and app make your phone your key, communicating with the lock via Bluetooth. This means you can give guests a self-destructing virtual key that'll only grant them access at a particular time.



NETATMO
WELCOME
US\$200 / netatmo.com

This automated doorman clocks everyone who walks in using facial recognition, so when the kids get home you'll get a notification. It records, too, and has a night mode so they can't sneak in late and expect to get away with it.



EERO
US\$500 / eero.com

To borrow a phrase from Heineken, Eero covers areas other Wi-Fi routers can't reach. It deploys a team of hubs around your home, creating a mesh network, so you won't get any annoying dead spots. That's quite important when everything inside needs a connection.

[Words Tom Wiggins Illustration Jing Zhang]



034

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CAVERN**
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LIVING ROOM

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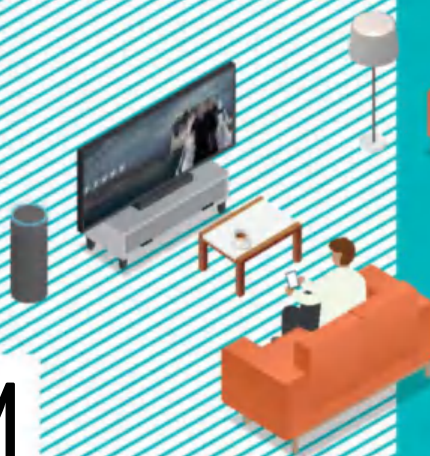
GARAGE
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KITCHEN
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03

LIVING ROOM



AMAZON ECHO

US\$180 / amazon.com

If you're concerned that nobody in your house ever seems to listen to you, Amazon's Echo might be just what you need.

Imagine Siri got evicted from your iPhone and took up residence in a robotic Pringles tube, and you've pretty much got the Echo.

It responds to voice commands, offering a hands-free way to check news, weather and sport scores; play music from your Amazon Music account or internet radio; set alarms and add stuff to your to-do lists; or just look up stuff on Wikipedia. Inside are seven microphones, so just say 'Alexa' to wake it up and it'll hear you even if it's playing music at the time.

There's also Bluetooth on board, so you can stream music from your phone or tablet, plus there's a 2.5in woofer and 2in tweeter inside – so it shouldn't sound like a musical Pringles tube.



Wiring up some surround sound speakers and a TV the size of an industrial solar panel used to be about the extent of it when it came to tech in the lounge, but nowadays your sofa can be a veritable Mission Control of comfy home automation.

Nest's Protect smoke alarm and Thermostat have now learned to talk to other gadgets. Nest doesn't just pick up on your habits and adjust your central heating

accordingly, or send a notification to your phone if the smoke alarm is triggered – it can now communicate with Jawbone's Up activity tracker, so it'll know to turn the heating on if you wake up early, and turn Lix lightbulbs into warning beacons when the Protect goes off (which works as a warning for anyone passing by and also helps you see in the dark if you have to evacuate); plus it can even receive GPS info from your car so the house will be

cooled when you get in from work. And not reduced to rubble from a fire, which would indicate that your Protect has stopped working.

There's also a Nest app for your Pebble and more partnerships with Philips Hue lightbulbs (see below), Withings' Aura (p34), LG's kitchen appliances and Kevo's smart lock. It all points towards a network of home tech that'll talk to each other – and more importantly, it'll do it even when you're not there.



PARROT POT
US\$149 / parrot.com

No, not something in which to cook tropical birds, but a receptacle that makes it almost impossible to kill your plants. The Parrot Pot comes with its own built-in 2.2-litre reservoir, enough for a month of automatic thirst quenching. Sensors can detect how much the plant needs, and with a database of 8000 plants it won't drown your cactus or leave your hibiscus gasping.



PETCUBE
US\$200 / petcube.com

With the internet pretty much powered by pictures of puppies and kittens it's a wonder anyone would need to see more of their pets, but if your furry babies are more important to you than any real ones, this connected camera is high-on essential. Check on them, talk to them and even play chase with them using the built-in laser pointer when you're not home.



LG CORDZERO
US\$820 / lg.com

The clue's in the name. LG's cordless canister vacuum cleaner sheds the shackles of tangled power cables, letting you glide about the house, sucking up loose lego bricks with wanton abandon thanks to a built-in lithium-ion battery. The vacuum cleaner also "watches" you as you dust-bust, automatically following you about at a constant distance like a well-trained dirt puppy.



PHILIPS HUE
from US\$60 / meethue.com

Philips' app-controlled, colour-changing light bulbs now have an extra trick up their LEDs that mimics some of the functionality you get from pairing them with an Ambilight telly. An app called Hue Camera (\$4 / iOS) checks your iPhone's lens to analyse your TV screen and uses the hue, saturation, luminance and more to recreate the colours with your Hue bulbs.

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KITCHEN

ANOVA PRECISION COOKER

If the techiest thing in your kitchen is the electric bread knife you got from the Innovations catalogue in 1998, it's time to rethink which gadgets grace your galley.

Appliances are now becoming much cleverer, with Jenn-Air's smartphone-controlled oven at the head of the table. Integration isn't half-baked: iOS and Android apps will give full control, as well as unique features like the Culinary Center, an interactive system

giving guidance; it offers more than 30 food options, based on clever algorithms taking into account food type, desired 'doneness' and cookware.

Elsewhere, Bosch is baking HomeConnect tech into its appliances, so your new fridge, dishwasher, washing machine and dryer are all online. That'll mean you can operate them from afar using an app and check the contents of your fridge from the supermarket via its built-in

cameras. Other companies plan to integrate the tech too. You'll never have an excuse for forgetting to buy milk again.

Of course, if all of that sounds a bit too much, you could always just invest in one of Heston Blumenthal's Sage toasters, which are powered by nuclear waste. Not really, it's just a nice toaster with buttons to quickly check on your gradually browning slice of bread. Because if there's one thing tech should fix, it's a decent breakfast.

US\$230 /
anovaculinary.com

Sous vide might sound like the name of that old teacher you didn't pay enough attention to in French class, but if you had you might know it actually means 'under vacuum'. It's a method of cooking that involves sealing food in bags and cooking it slowly in warm water — and Anova's Bluetooth-equipped Precision Cooker adds a pinch of tech.

It heats and swirls the water around like a whirlpool to ensure a consistent temperature throughout the pot, plus it comes with an app (obviously) that lists a load of recipes to choose from, automatically setting the time and temperature based on what you pick. Or if you want to go off-menu and cook something exotic — puffin, for example — you can adjust it yourself. What comes out should be evenly cooked and juicier than the tales from Del Monte's stag do.



MELD
US\$130 /
meldhome.com

You don't have to replace your entire cooker to get some robo-help with your dinner. Meld's two-part chef's assistant consists of a smart knob (stop sniggering) that attaches to the dashboard of your cooker, and a sensor that goes in the pot. Tell the app what you're cooking and it'll monitor the temperature and adjust the heat as required.



SMARTER
COFFEE
US\$280 / firebox.com

Trying to get a stressed-out barista to pay attention to your highly specific coffee order is a lot tougher than just telling your phone. This grinder 'n' brewer is controlled with an app that allows you to alter the quantity and blend from your bed. It even supports IFTTT, so you can have it start blending the second you start to stir in the morning.



AMAZON DASH
BUTTON
from US\$free /
amazon.com

You've run out of dog food. Again. But before you feed Rupert another one of the kids, consider sticking one of Amazon's Dash Buttons to the kitchen wall. Each one is tied to a particular product — such as washing powder — and when you've nearly run out, you press it. Your Prime account then automatically orders and dispatches more.



INVOXIA TRIBY
US\$tba / invoxia.com

Not everything in the kitchen is about cooking. Invoxia's Tribby isn't a misspelled hat, it's a kind of digital post-it note that lets you use the accompanying app to leave written messages on its 2.9in E Ink display, use it as a hands-free kit or stream music from your phone; plus it's magnetic, so you can stick it to your smart fridge and make it that little bit smarter.



TurboWash™

LG TurboWash™ by 6 Motion Direct Drive uses a unique Jet Spray™ for superior washing results. So, you'll always be satisfied with its powerful performance that saves time and energy. Make every day better by living smarter.

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www.lg.com/ae



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Inverter Direct Drive

By eliminating its belt and pulley, Inverter Direct Drive System increases the motor's efficiency and makes it resistant to breakdowns. The simplified system helps reduce noise levels as well.



A/V CAVERN



ROTO VR

from US\$250 / rotovr.com

As long as most of us have furniture, pets and other humans clogging up our homes, dodging zombies with a VR headset on is going to be problematic.

Roto VR puts you on a motorised pedestal that physically rotates you when your character does, reducing the risk of motion sickness. A footpad adds pedals to control movement — such as acceleration and braking in a car, plane or spaceship — although the Roto VR remains in place rather than scooting back and forth across the carpet like a rideable Roomba. A table can also be added for a steering wheel or other input device — perfect for EVE: Valkyrie.

Whatever you're playing (or watching) can also take control of the plinth's movement and spin you around to face whatever ghastly scene the director wants you to. At least you can have a little sit down afterwards.



With the last signs of life finally leaving the corpse of 3D TV, it's time to prepare your living room for the next revolution, and 4K has its feet well and truly under the coffee table (the new Ikea one, with the wireless charging panels). So what other ear and eyeball-pleasers can we expect to take root in the lounge in the not-too-distant future?

Virtual reality might be gaming's next big thing but, for socialising

in the living room, things might sometimes need to be a little more inclusive than disappearing inside a helmet on a journey to an entirely new world.

The Immersis (US\$2800, immersisvr.com) is an augmented reality projector that projects way beyond the limits of your TV; it also uses 3D mapping to incorporate the surrounding walls. And it's not just for gaming either: you can also feed it videos and photos to give them the all-walls

treatment. It's Full HD rather than 4K, which means there aren't as many pixels to play with as we'd like, but if your telly's too small and you don't have a wall suitable for a standard projector, then an Immersis could fulfil all your home cinema dreams. Unless you have \$1.8m lying around, in which case you can upgrade those dreams to include your own IMAX screen, complete with dual 4K projectors, a proprietary surround sound system and 200 pre-loaded films.



SHARP AQUOS BEYOND 4K ULTRA HD TV
US\$1499 / sharp.com

Sharp heard you like pixels, so it put pixels inside its pixels so you can pixel while you pixel. What that really means is there are 66 million sub-pixels beyond the standard 3840x2160 resolution, which boost it to something approaching 8K. And you thought finding stuff to watch in 4K was difficult...



3D SOUND LABS NEOH
US\$300 / 3dsoundlabs.com

Try wearing your surround sound system and you'll end up with a very cumbersome hat, so these headphones are probably a better option. They use motion sensors and head-tracking tech to replicate surround sound that reacts to where you look. It currently only works with iThings, but Android and PC support is on the way.



DEVIALET PHANTOM
US\$2000 / devialet.com

Still playing CDs on an old hi-fi? Get yourself to a museum, grandad. Devialet's Phantom might look like an ancient contraption that holds the key to eternal life but its Wi-Fi streaming from phones, PCs and Macs, or direct from the web, hi-res capabilities and multiroom potential prove it's definitely more interested in bringing life to your ears.



ZAPPITI PLAYER 4K
US\$320 / zappiti.com

Chances are there'll never be a disc format for 4K, so streamers such as this one will be your route in. Netflix's 4K shows only work on certain TVs for now but the Zappiti Player's Android OS means it'll be ready when they are. In the meantime its hard-drive hole takes anything up to 6TB — plenty of space — and it also supports Dolby's sound-bouncing Atmos audio tech.



HUAWEI WATCH

TIMELESS DESIGN • SMART WITHIN



BEDROOM + BATHROOM



**RESMED
S+**

You spend a third of your life asleep. If you think about it, that's a lot of time wasted that could be spent fiddling with your phone, so you owe it to yourself to make sure there's enough tech in your bedroom that'll allow you to do plenty of phone-fiddling when you wake up in the morning.

Right now the bedroom is dominated by tech that tracks your slumber, monitoring your tossing and turning, and doing

its best to help you to get a good night's sleep.

What began with simple apps that monitored how well you slept using your phone's built-in sensors, such as Sleep Cycle for iOS and SleepBot for Android, has developed into far more sophisticated standalone gadgets. Wearables such as Jawbone's Up and Misfit's Shine took it to the next level, but if you prefer to spend your nights *au naturel* there are now gadgets that don't

need to cling to your body to know what's happening.

Withings' Aura is a bedside lamp that connects to a sensor positioned under the mattress, feeding back info on your sleep patterns and activating special lighting patterns to help you wake up naturally, rather than as if you've just had a gorilla slide into bed next to you. It also works with Nest, so it'll tell your a/c when you've gone to bed and it's time for everyone to chill out.

US\$300 / amazon.com

There are few things creepier than the thought of someone watching you while you sleep, but that's exactly how ResMed's S+ works. It sits by your bed and observes your slumber without any contact whatsoever, using sonar-type tech to work out when your body moves, picking up everything from rolling over to the expansion of your chest as your breathe in and out. It's like living with a medically trained, highly conscientious bat.

The S+ also has sensors to monitor light, noise and temperature in the room, which it combines with your movement data to produce a personalised sleep report that you can view on your phone with the S+ app (US\$free / iOS, Android). The app will then use that info to offer you tips on how to kip better — ones that don't include your usual series of pre-bedtime bevies.



**LUNA SMART
MATTRESS
COVER**

from US\$250 / lunasleep.com

Yes, it's another sleep tracker, but Luna's clever mattress cover does so much more. It's split into two zones, so it'll track two people at once and provide two sets of stats, plus you can warm both sides of the bed to different temperatures and preheat it from your phone, like the world's most comfortable oven.



**SONY
SYMPHONIC
LIGHT**

US\$tba / sony.com

Convergence has slowed down somewhat since the smartphone became the 21st-century Swiss Army knife, but Sony has combined a speaker with a lamp and kicked the whole thing off again. The sound is pushed through the glass so when it's not playing tunes it looks like any normal lamp. What next, a sofa that's also a blender?



KOLIBREE
US\$tba / kolibree.com

Ever since members of the Tang Dynasty attached bristles to a stick in the 7th century, the toothbrush hasn't really changed all that much — until now. Kolibree's clever peg-shiner connects to your phone over Bluetooth and sends info on how you're brushing to its app, which also includes games to encourage kids to keep their teeth clean.



**WITHINGS
SMART BODY
ANALYZER**
US\$150 / withings.com

As its name suggests, the Smart Body Analyzer does way more than just tell you you've eaten too many Jaffa Cakes. As well as your weight, it'll measure your heart rate through your feet, work out your body fat and BMI, and even monitor the quality of the air, before feeding everything back to its Android or iOS app.



Legendary Performance. Unlimited Possibilities.

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marantz



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Times Square Center, Sheikh Zayed Road (Ample basement parking available) Contact No.: 04-3234466 tsc@dgplus.org

*Terms & conditions apply. Offer valid on select models. Offer valid till 31st December 2015.



GARAGE + GARDEN

DROPLET

If your Wi-Fi struggles to reach further than the walls of your house then you might think the garden, garage and shed would be a tech-free zone, but that doesn't mean green-fingered gadget fans should board their ride-on lawnmowers and disappear into the sunset (mainly because there are plenty of robots that'll do that job for you now). The garden is a prime spot for tech because it's exactly the kind of place that's crying out

for some sort of automation – it doesn't require constant attention, but if left alone can quickly get out of hand.

Take Edyn, for example, which works a bit like a fitness band for your garden. With the solar-powered sensor stuck in the soil it monitors light, humidity, temperature, soil nutrition and moisture, and goes all Alan Titchmarsh on the accompanying app to recommend what kind of plants are most suited to your

garden, or when the ones you already have need some TLC.

Once you've planted them you can take it to the next level with the Edyn Water Valve, which, on instruction from the app, can be used to control when your garden gets watered; plus there's a whole dashboard of facts and figures about the state of your soil.

But it's not just the flower beds that can benefit here. Here's our pick of the latest garden and garage tech...

US\$300 / smartdroplet.com

When you live in a part of the world that's known for being hotter than a pizza oven filled with chilli jam, there might not be huge demand for a garden, let alone a plant-watering robot, but Droplet's so smart you'll be tempted to buy one even if you're halfway up a high-rise.

Plug it into your hose, tell the app where your plants are (and what type) and the Droplet will take it from there, firing jets of water out to each one that's within its 30-foot range. Its onboard Wi-Fi taps into online weather info so it knows when to water. And it's not just about convenience: because it's so much more accurate than a normal sprinkler it uses up to 90% less water, plus it can show you data on exactly how much water went where, which will give you something to discuss next time you bump into Keith from next door.



GRILLBOT
US\$130 / grillbots.com

After a hard day mining delicious sausages at the culinary coalface that is your barbecue, the last thing you want to do is clean the thing. But Grillbot does. It skitters across the cooking surface for up to 30 minutes, using three rotating, motor-driven wire brushes to scrub it clean. It even works if it's still hot. Well, why should the carpets have all the robo-cleaning fun anyway?



RAPERÉ
US\$2ba / rapere.io

If faithful Fido feels a bit Dog 1.0 when it comes to home security, don't worry: soon you'll be able to have your own guard drone to protect your property from flying snoopers. The Rapere can detect an unidentified airborne intruder, hover above it and drop a tangle line into its props, perhaps for Fido to retrieve when it hits the ground. There's life in the old dog yet.



LG TURBOWASH
US\$2ba / lg.com

It's hard to get excited about a washing machine, but LG's speedy washer can cut a typical 95 minute cotton wash cycle down to just under an hour, so at least you'll spend less time bothering with it. Its 6 Motion Direct Drive creates different drum movements to cover all kinds of garments and LG swear its just as effective as hand washing – or at least less annoying.



PICOBREW ZYMATIC
US\$2000 / picobrew.com

You've grown your own veg, baked your own bread and milked the odd llama but the holy grail remains: brewing your own bevies. Unlike the chemistry set that's usually required, PicoBrew's internet-enabled Zymatic system automatically adds the ingredients based on the recipe you've chosen and brews it up in about four hours, then starts fermenting.

OPINION

TOM WIGGINS
DEPUTY EDITOR

Why communication is the key to the robo-home

Between the start of this feature and the page you're reading now, there's been a lot of very capable gadgets that allow you to take control of your home in ways never before possible, but they also have one thing in common: they don't really work that well together. While we've obviously come a long way from the electric bread knife and other wonders of the Innovations catalogue, much of the home tech available at the moment exists in a world of its own, unable to communicate much further than to an accompanying app on the phone in your pocket.

But there are some signs of a change. Nest (1), now owned by

Google, has opened up its API to allow other tech, such as Philips Hue lightbulbs and August's and Kevo's (2) respective smart locks, to talk to its thermostat and smoke alarm so they know when you're not there and react accordingly; while Apple's forthcoming HomeKit (3) platform is compatible with Honeywell thermostats, Withings' connected-home products (4) and many more to come.

HomeKit was announced at last year's WWDC, Apple's big developer shindig, and chances are this year will deliver more info on exactly how far its tentacles will stretch, how it'll work with Siri and your Apple Watch, and when it

will be available. Having had a year to work on apps and compatible products, the hope is we'll see some Apple-flavoured home tech in the next month or so.

THE HOME STRAIGHT

But Apple is hardly renowned for playing nicely with others, and that means Nest might not be on the list. Some products will work with both platforms but the problem is the systems themselves won't work together. What's developing appears to be a classic tech format war between the two platforms, and the only people who benefit from those are the winner's accountants. There are other competitors too: the AllSeen Alliance has over 140 backers for its AllJoyn system, including Qualcomm, LG and Sony, and the Open Interconnect Consortium is backed by Intel and Samsung.

What we're left with is (at least) four different systems vying to become the universal standard for connected home kit, each with its own manufacturers attached – albeit with some crossover. Until the whole home is speaking the same language we'll never be able to make the next step towards genuine automation, and gadget fans like you and me won't be able to take advantage without fear of backing the wrong horse.

If a house really is a machine for living in, the engine's coughing and spluttering because nobody's quite sure what to fuel it with... but after a bit of tuning we could soon have it purring sweetly.



20 BEST SMARTPHONES IN THE WORLD

Thinking about an upgrade? Just can't stand to be without the latest handset? We've tracked down 20 of the most worthy smartphones, so whether you're a pixel perfectionist, app junkie or portable gamer, we've got you covered. Read on.

Words Mike Priest • Photography & Coordination Farooq Salik
Art Direction Clarkwin Cruz • Stylist Cherith Nicholl
Hair & Makeup Wajahat • Model Solomia

Dress by Rachel Zoe @ Harvey Nichols. Earrings by Erickson Beamon

Sony Xperia Z5 Premium

US\$790 / sonymobile.com

The world's first 4K smartphone is insanely pixel-packed, with a 5.5in 3840 x 2160 display equating to a staggering pixel-per-inch count of 808. You get the same stellar 23MP camera as the rest of the Z5 range and a 3430mAh battery that churns out two solid days of use.

ALP 5.5in 23MP

Samsung Galaxy S6

from US\$570 / samsung.com

The Galaxy's had a much needed makeover. Not just when it comes to looks – its super tough Gorilla Glass 4 and aluminium stylings are indeed stunning – but its awesome 16MP camera and lightning fast octa-core Exynos 7420 processor make it the flagship superphone to beat. Sure, there are the larger and more powerful S6 Edge+ and Note 5 to consider, but if you're looking for standard Sammy, this is your best bet.

ALP 5.1in 16MP



NOW APP THIS Slack iOS, Android



It wears the beard of business, and talks about 'all your team communication in one place', and that is one side of Slack. It's a real-time messaging system, where you can talk all businessy about business things, and almost never drift into a conversation about jetpacks. But Slack also works as a group communication tool for anyone, and it doesn't care if you're iPhone, Android, Mac or PC. There's even a Windows Phone version on the way.

Huawei Honor 7

US\$520 / hihonor.com

The most notable change the Honor 7 brings to the table from its predecessor is the addition of a gesture-sensitive fingerprint scanner. Aside from the standard unlock features, the scanner also reads fingerprint movement, allowing for quick control of notifications panel and camera. Spec-wise, it's packing 4 Cortex A53 cores, one set clocked at 2.2GHz and the others at 1.5GHz, and 3GB of RAM for added speed.

ALP 5.2in 20MP



NOW APP THIS Flipboard iOS, Android



The death of magazines has been greatly exaggerated. How do we know? Well, for one, you're holding one right now; and secondly, Flipboard turns your social media feeds into a constantly updating digital mag with full-screen pictures and a page-turning navigation layout. How's that for an inspiration? You can also add RSS feeds (may we suggest Stuff's own site?) to tweak it to your tastes, but obviously it's not as good as the real thing.

Google Nexus 6P

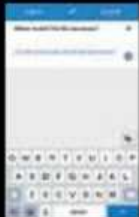
from US\$500 / google.com

Google handed the reigns to this year's flagship to Huawei, and the Chinese manufacturer knocked it out of the park. A premium-grade aluminum unibody design, coupled with an octa-core Snapdragon 810 processor and 3GB RAM is just the tip of the iceberg. Add a 5.7in 2K AMOLED screen, Type-C USB and an upgraded snapper into the mix and you have Google's best Android phone to date.

AMM 5.7in 12.3MP



NOW APP THIS Google Translate iOS, Android



While it's not a good idea to completely rely on Google Translate, just in case you find yourself parroting 'could not connect to translator service' in perfect Swedish, it can be a lifesaver. It now translates (sometimes clunkily) into over 70 languages with input via text, speech or even text recognition via the camera. Pro tip: download language packs before you go to avoid bankrupting yourself with roaming charges.

Apple iPhone 6s

US\$650 / apple.com

"Everything's changed" is pushing it, but within the 6s's familiar body lies a surprising amount of innovation. You'll really notice the A9 processor's added speed and the 12MP camera's scope and quality, and of course, the time-saving delight that is 3D-Touch. Is it worth the upgrade from last year's model? That's for you (and your wallet) to decide, but if you're on anything lower, it's the smart move to make.

IOS 4.7in 12MP



NOW APP THIS Evernote iOS, Android



Evernote is a dumping ground (in a good way) for everything. Got a quick idea for something amazing? Bung it in Evernote! Got a receipt? Chuck it in Evernote! Fancy recording yourself yelling "AAARGH!" because you forgot to save a receipt in Evernote and have since misplaced it? Upload it to Evernote! It's clean, fairly simple, hugely flexible, very cross-platform, possibly a bit too green, and remembers stuff so you don't have to.

OnePlus 2

US\$420 / oneplus.com

Undercutting the big boys at their own game when it comes to performance, software and battery life at a fraction of the cost. We're talking a Snapdragon 810 processor and a bonkers 4GB of RAM, on top of a solid rear camera – that's placed considerably lower down than last year's model – and while it only has a 1080p screen, that means its 3300mAh battery should last for ages.



ALP 5.5in 13MP

NOW APP THIS NASA App iOS, Android



Fancy an app that deals with the most breathtaking sights available to us paltry, insignificant human beings (that's outer space, not your collection of selfies)? NASA's app is full of spectacular images and videos from its archive, but it's also teeming with news and features on everything from cubesats to the progress of individual missions. Also handy if you're an alien species planning to invade our planet.

HTC One M9+

US\$710 / htc.com

This is phone the M9 should have been. It has an updated 5.2in screen with 2560 x 1440 2K resolution, a physical home button-slash-fingerprint scanner, a proper 20MP camera and all the lovely design details we've come to expect from HTC's flagship smartphone line. Existing M9 owners don't have many reasons to be jealous but if you've been holding off for an HTC handset with bumper specs then it's finally here.



ALP 5.2in 20MP

NOW APP THIS Airbnb iOS, Android



Hotels are great for ordering a pizza to your room at 3am but they rarely give you a real taste of what it's like to live in a town. Airbnb is one of the stars of the so-called shareconomy, a network built around normal people offering up their unused rooms (or whole properties) for a bit of extra cash. The result? You'll be able to find somewhere to stay in the heart of the city, up a mountain or even up a tree, often for a very decent price.

Sony Xperia Z5 Compact

US\$630 / sonymobile.com

Catering to smaller-handed gadgeteers, the Z5 Compact sports a 4.6in 720P screen, but the same guts as the rest of the new Xperia line (Snapdragon 810 processor, 3GB RAM and support for microSD expansion) meaning, it's one of the best petite handsets out there if you're just gagging for a smaller phone and have money to burn.



ALP 4.6in 23MP

NOW APP THIS 7 Minute Workout iOS, Android



It turns out you can do quite a lot in seven minutes. Make some coffee, sing the whole of *Hey Jude* by The Beatles (minus the final 11 seconds) or do one of Wahoo's 7-minute workouts, which work with Healthkit on iOS and Google Fit on Android. They're based on high-intensity circuit training, so whether you're after overall fitness or a stomach that looks like six bread rolls in a plastic bag and you don't fancy spending any money, this is worth a look.

LG G4

US\$490 / lg.com

The G4's classy leather looks set it apart from the rest of the crowd, but it still packs the power to compete. A massive 5.5in QHD LCD screen means photos and videos positively pop during playback. It doesn't have the price advantage that the G3 had last year, but LG have included a 16MP sensor and f/1.8 lens making it the ultimate smartphone low-light snapper.



ALP 5.5in 16MP

NOW APP THIS Snapseed iOS, Android



Most smartphone snappers don't have time to touch up every pic before loosing it into the interweb. Snapseed makes post-production a job that's done quicker than you can say "cheeeeeeeese". Choose an adjustment – such as 'black & white' or 'tilt-shift' – and you're provided with a gestural interface for making changes. Dragging defines focal points and the strength of effects, ensuring it's easier than falling off a buttered log.

Huawei Mate SUS\$640 / huawei.com

The Huawei Mate S oozes quality. Its slim design incorporates a 5.5in Full HD AMOLED screen with only a tiny bit of surround filling out the sides. It's also the first superphone to offer Force Touch (beating Apple at their own game) for a whole raft of additional gestures and an upgraded fingerprint scanner.

ALP

5.5in

13MP

Apple iPhone 6s Plus

from US\$750 / apple.com

Size matters, and the iPhone 6s Plus does a fantastic job of showcasing Apple's latest hardware features. The new 12MP camera not only takes great shots (thanks to built-in OIS) but now shoots in stunning 4K as well. 3D Touch, with its pressure sensitive controls, is the future of smartphone navigation.

IOS

5.5in

12MP

Top by Alice & Olivia. Skirt by Avlu @ Harvey Nichols. Earrings by Erickson Beamon

Microsoft Lumia 950

US\$550 / microsoft.com

This is it. Microsoft's first fully featured Windows 10 flagship, and boy is it a doozy. Packing a hexa-core Snapdragon 808 chip and 3GB of RAM, the 950 should find it easy to zip around the new OS without breaking a sweat. Couple that with a 3000mAh battery and a 20MP camera and Microsoft have a strong showing on their hands. We love the optional display dock that lets you hook up a screen, mouse and keyboard.



W10 5.2in 20MP

NOW APP THIS **TED** iOS, Android, Windows Phone



If you're worried about losing it through lack of using it, use the TED app to give your grey matter a regular workout with talks from extremely clever brain instructors, which you can stream or download to view offline. We're particularly keen on the Inspire Me section, which allows you to define the type of video you want to watch and the time you've got spare. The app will then do its best to find something to fit.

Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge+

from US\$650 / samsung.com

The regular S6 Edge is already a thing of smartphone beauty, but in true Samsung style they went ahead and super-sized it. The plus-ier model comes with a blisteringly gorgeous 5.7in Quad HD Super AMOLED display, 4GB of RAM and a faster charging battery than its smaller brother. Phablets are all the rage these days and if you have the cash to splash, this is the Samsung you're looking for.



ALP 5.7in 16MP

NOW APP THIS **Periscope** iOS, Android



Unless you're someone like Danny Dyer or Craig David, there's probably not a lot in your daily life that's worth livestreaming. But every now and then an ordinary (wo)man sees something extraordinary that should be shared as it happens, such as a stampede of duck-sized cows, or a flock of cow-sized ducks. For those moments there's Periscope, which lets you livestream video to the world from your phone's camera.

LG V10

US\$750 / lg.com

Sporting a Snapdragon 808 processor, 4GB RAM and 64GB of internal storage, the LG V10 is clearly no slouch. But it's what sits above its 5.7in Quad HD main panel that sets it apart from the competition. Specifically a smaller, 2.1in IPS display that is designed to aid in both multitasking and personalisation. The V10 is also a video powerhouse, able to capture 4K footage thanks to a 16MP camera that offers a full manual mode for tweaking.



ALP 5.7in 16MP

NOW APP THIS **FxGuru: Movie FX Director** iOS, Android



Your friends are all bored to tears of your home videos. Until one of the kids does something incredible, like survive a missile attack or an encounter with a UFO, they'll continue to just about feign interest. FxGuru will fool them into thinking they've done just that (as long as your friends are quite stupid) with special effects that are superimposed as you shoot, with motion tracking allowing you to pan as you film.

Motorola Moto G

from US\$180 / motorola.com

Losing a little of the its cut-throat bargain feel, the 2015 Moto G is a smidgen pricier than last year's cheap and cheerful offering. The extra cash is worth it though, as you get a 1080p screen, a surprisingly excellent 13MP snapper with dual-LED flash and a bevy of customisation options courtesy of Motorola's Moto Maker. Just be sure to spring for the option with 2GB of RAM if you want a little more "oomph" with your handset.



ALP 5in 13MP

NOW APP THIS **Longform** iOS, Android



Sometimes it seems the internet's all cat pictures, BuzzFeed lists and Katie Hopkins. Longform pushes all that to the side and only collects together stuff that's over 1500 words long. You can follow particular writers and publishers, or just let the Longform staff pick stuff out each day that they think is worth spending another 10 minutes looking at your phone for. As if you wouldn't be doing that anyway...

Sony Xperia Z5 Dual

US\$680 / sonymobile.com

While it doesn't harbour as flashy a screen as its 4K counterpart – the standard Z5 sports a 5.2in 1080p display – Sony's new flagship is still impressive. Its frosted glass back is a stroke of genius design and we love the fingerprint sensor built into the now elongated power button. Plus you're still getting all the lovely waterproofing prowess that the Xperia line has become renowned for.



ALP 5.2in 23MP

NOW APP THIS

Duolingo: Learn Languages Free

iOS, Android, Windows Phone



Google Translate is fine for ordering *dos cervezas* when you're away for the weekend but not if you're planning to go native. Duolingo turns learning a language into something akin to a pub quiz machine where the topics are Spanish, French, German, Portuguese and Italian. 'Play' regularly and you should be able to pick up enough to not be a typical tourist embarrassment.

Samsung Note 5

from US\$650 / samsung.com

Receiving a premium update that saw it lose its microSD slot and removable battery in favour of the stylish design chops bestowed upon the Galaxy S6. This is still Sammy's best scribbler yet thanks to a blazingly fast Exynos 7420 processor, reduced latency S Pen and a 16MP rear snapper. That 2K 5.7in Super AMOLED panel is the same one you'll find on the S6 Edge+ and, yup, it's still pumping out vibrant colours and deep, true blacks.



ALP 5.7in 16MP

NOW APP THIS

TuneIn Radio

iOS, Android, Windows Phone



With Zane Lowe and Apple Music teaching the Snapchat generation that music isn't just something you find on YouTube, online radio has seen something of a recent resurgence. With its 100,000 live stations and two million podcasts, it's unlikely you'll ever be stuck for something to listen to on TuneIn Radio – plus you won't get Lowe shouting over the top of songs like he does on Beats 1. Oh, and there's no monthly fee to use it. Bonus.

Lenovo Phab Plus

US\$400 / lenovo.com

Big phones are here to stay these days, but is 6.8in really necessary? Lenovo certainly thinks so. The enormous real estate nets you a 326ppi Full HD display and the Snapdragon 615 octa-core processor is more than up for the task of handling Android Lollipop. For those concerned, there's a one-handed mode that snaps to whichever side you tilt the phone towards meaning you don't need to have hulk hands to use it.



ALP 6.8in 13MP

NOW APP THIS

Nuzzel

iOS, Android



Nuzzel might sound like an app that delivers kittens to your eyes in emergency situations but the app you're thinking of there is actually called Twitter. Nuzzel cuts out all that nonsense, taking the news links from your Twitter and Facebook feeds and removing the #humblebrags, #firstworldproblems and #transportchaos. It's a bit like being friends with a load of newsreaders. Say hello to Jon Snow for us.

Oppo R7s

US\$360 / oppo.com

Oppo has opted to pair a whopping 4GB of RAM with a somewhat middle-of-the-road Snapdragon 615 processor, an odd move but we've no doubt it'll make the R7s extra zippy. The company's fast-charging VOOC tech is also present giving its 3,070mAh battery you two hours of talk time after just a five minute charge, which it'll need to help offset all the heavy lifting it'll be doing on its bonus RAM chips.

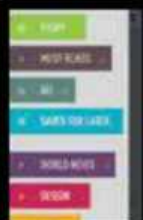


ALP 5.5in 13MP

NOW APP THIS

Feedly

iOS, Android



After the demise of Google Reader, the world needed an alternative – and Feedly fits the bill nicely. It does everything you'd want from an RSS reader, presenting the latest stories from your favourite media outlets and blogs in an easily browsable list. You'll find every site you might be interested in – yes, Stuff.tv/me is there – plus it integrates neatly with the likes of Instapaper and Evernote, and sharing stories to social media is but a matter of a click.

HTC One A9US\$149 / htc.com

It's the first non-Nexus phone to get Android's Marshmallow OS and with its sleek, rounded design - available in some seriously strikingly coloured metal finishes - a 5in 1080p screen, 13MP rear camera and Qualcomm Snapdragon 617 octa-core with 2GB RAM, it has us very impressed indeed.

AMM

5in

13MP

Pretty as a 4K picture

Sony's only gone and made 'the world's thinnest' telly. We find out just how well it can hang.

BEST FOR...
WALL
HANGING

Lil' feet

You don't need a super-wide bench: those feet can be positioned at the edges or near the centre of the screen.

Sony Bravia 55X9000C US\$3560 / sony.com

What's the story?

You don't have time for silly things. You'd happily knock your living room wall down to make space for a piece of modern art if you hadn't already done so. Your life is dope and you do dope things. Nothing is going to get in the way of you sailing your flagship television.

If that sounds like you, then you need this TV in your life. Why? Because the X9000C truly is a thing of beauty. Its "floating" design makes it just 4.9mm at its

thinnest (yup, that's skinnier than an iPhone 6), meaning it'll sit flush against the wall as the most expensive picture frame you've ever owned. When you're not using it to watch a film or play video games, that is.

Picture perfect?

This isn't Sony's top-of-the-line 4K Bravia mind, and as a result that's evident in some key areas. But first the good bits: The picture processing on this set is superb, due to the new 4K Processor X1

that does a fantastic job of making pictures 'pop'. It also has some serious 4K upscaling chops to bring your regular HD content to improved levels.

Sadly though, the black levels on this telly suffer dramatically when compared to some of its rivals. You can fiddle around with the ambient light sensor and backlight control to alleviate this a bit but blacks still come out looking gray (particularly in the corners of the panel) in a dark room. The Android TV interface is a

little disappointing, too. It's clunky compared to LG's WebOS or Samsung's Tizen interfaces, and could do with more apps.

We'd highly recommend using this set in a brightly lit room where it's able to reach its fullest potential - it's just not the right fit for your darkened man cave.

TECH SPECS

Screen size 55in
Dimensions 123.2x77.4x25.7 cm (including stand)
HDMI 4 USB 3 Weight 18.4kg

STUFF SAYS A work of art design-wise, just don't expect OLED-rivalling blacks ★★★★★



Continuous heart rate



Workouts and all day activity



Caller ID and Watch



Exercise tracking



Auto sleep tracking and silent alarm



Wireless sync



Long battery life

 fitbit.chargeHR™

Every
beat counts

HEART RATE + ACTIVITY WRISTBAND

Make every beat count with Charge HR—an advanced tracker that delivers continuous, wrist-based heart rate and activity tracking all-day, during workouts and beyond.

 fitbit.

Discover a whole new
world of fitness.

Available at all leading Sports and Electronic stores
Distributed by Lionfish General Trading - www.lionf.com

The secret of our 6s

Apple has introduced 3D Touch and an improved camera to the iPhone 6s, but is that enough tech to keep pace with the Android competition?

from US\$550 / apple.com

On first glance, the iPhone 6s doesn't look at all different from its predecessor. On every glance, in fact, the 6s is near-identical to the mega-selling iPhone 6.

Aside from the 's' on its rump and a slight weight gain that you won't notice, Jony Ive's ultra-thin curved aluminium design is still in place. And it looks as desirable as ever.

What's changed with the 6s is the finesse it's been lavished with: it's a subtly significant upgrade. The more durable glass and metal make the 6s less prone to scratches – bye bye #bendgate. Its new A9 processor with built-in M9 motion chip is blisteringly speedy, although Samsung's S6 is faster. It also has a new 12MP camera that captures 4K video and moving Live Photos (or GIFs, as we all know them).

Most significant of all is 3D Touch, a new gesture for iPhone using haptic feedback. You might have encountered it via Force Touch on the Watch or MacBook. It's simple, useful and oh so Apple. What else were you expecting?



1 The golden Touch

3D Touch gives you a preview of messages by pressing down on them and acts as a shortcut menu for other apps. You'll feel a buzz to let you know your touch has registered. Returning to our old iPhone 6, we found ourselves forlornly prodding it in vain.

2 Finally, more megapixels!

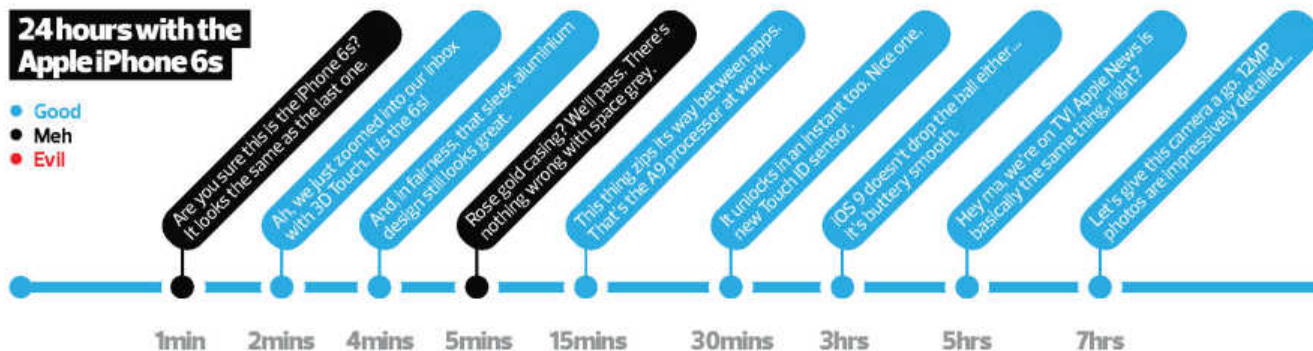
The 6s's updated 12MP camera captures sharper photos than the 6's 8MP effort, allowing you to zoom in and pick out the finer details in pictures. The Live Photos feature is also surprisingly delightful. Pity Facebook doesn't support it yet.

3 Chips off the old block

According to our tests, the 6s and its A9 processor proved nearly twice as fast as a year-old iPhone 6's A8 chip. That'll be reason enough for some to upgrade. Touch ID is doubly quick too: the moment you press Home, you're launched straight into your phone.

24 hours with the Apple iPhone 6s

- Good
- Meh
- Evil





Tech specs

Screen 4.7in Retina HD 1334x750 (326ppi) **OS** iOS 9
Processor Apple A9 **Cameras** 12MP rear, 5MP front
Battery 1715mAh **Storage** 16/64/128GB **RAM** 2GB
Dimensions 138x67x7.1mm **Weight** 143g

iOS 9 explained

Apple's latest OS upgrade includes many features we've waited a long time for. Here's four of them:



■ Siri gets serious

The Siri Suggestions screen presents you with a search field (which you can use with either text or your voice) plus a panel of your most used contacts, local services and local news. Handy.



■ Smooth operator

Mercifully, iOS 9 is every bit as slick as iOS 8.4. Apps open and load quickly, and the swipe between homescreens is instantaneous. And that's a state of affairs that should only improve.



■ Almost Evernote

Notes finally lets you jot down just about anything into a page, from a Word doc to a PDF to a bookmark clipped from Safari. You can also switch between typing and drawing in seconds.



■ Read all about it

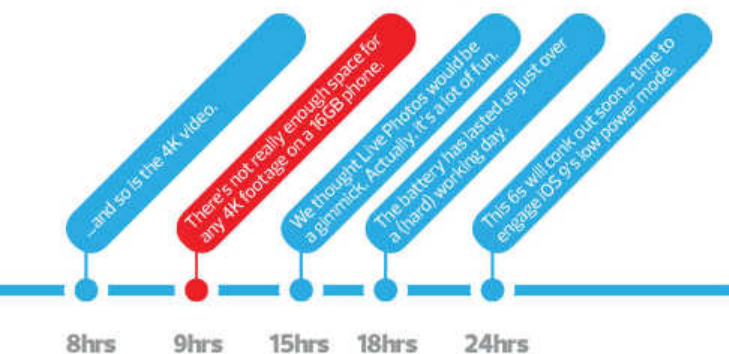
Replacing Newsstand, News plays back feeds from a host of popular publishers (including us!) and presents them in a simple interface. If you've ever used Flipboard or Feedly, you'll feel at home.

4 4K store bore

The 6s's 4K video is amazingly detailed, but it comes at a storage price. One minute of video will claw away 375MB, which will turn off owners of a 16GB model from using the feature. Spend US\$649 on a 64GB handset and you'll have no such trouble.

5 Battery flattery

Although the iPhone 6s sports a smaller 1715mAh battery than the iPhone 6, its performance is largely unchanged thanks to the power-economic magic of iOS 9. We pummelled the 6s with video and gaming apps for 10 hours and it still had a third of its life left.



The iPhone 6s takes what was already good about its predecessor and refines these features. The less brilliant stuff, like an average battery life and stingy 16GB storage option, remain in place; these flaws are more than balanced out by a fantastic camera, faster processor and more sturdy design. As for 3D Touch? It's sensational.

@elissaloi

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

All new on the inside, less so on the outside: the 6s is full of innovative finesse

Match of the disc tray

When it comes to football simulations, *FIFA* has long had the edge over *Pro Evolution Soccer*. But when their 2016 editions go head to head, will the underdog bite back?

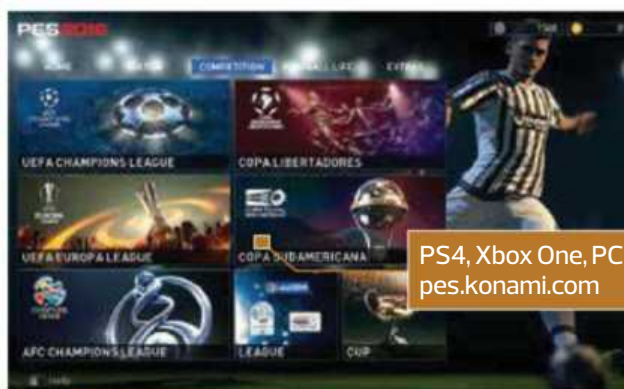
PS4, Xbox One, PC / easports.com/fifa16



FIFA 16

vs

PES 2016



PS4, Xbox One, PC / pes.konami.com

The first thing you'll notice about *FIFA 16* is a key one: it's harder to score goals.

In previous editions it was fairly easy to create space behind defences for attackers to occupy and then play passes into it. *FIFA 16*'s teams, however, hold their shape much more stubbornly. Neat one-touch passing and smart running are required to break through the lines.

Thankfully, EA has provided a new weapon to aid this: a driven ground pass, executed by holding R1/RB when you press the standard pass button. This plays the ball with much more force, making it harder for the opposition to intercept.

You might just need this aid to quick breaks, because teams don't give you long on the ball. Defenders are better at cutting out balls over the top, and goalies are off their line quicker than you can say 'sweeper keeper'.

EA has also added a piggy-in-the-middle drill to the pre-match mini-games. It's one worth

practising, as opposition players do seem more prone to making errors under pressure.

Pacey players seem less able to burn off their markers, but they can now use no-touch dribbling to get through instead, which involves holding L1/LB to literally stop touching the ball, tempting the defender into a tackle before bursting away into space. When you finally get it right it works brilliantly, allowing you to get half a yard on an opponent.

Arguably the biggest addition to *FIFA 16* is 12 national women's teams. The women's game is slightly less physical and the opposition doesn't press so intensively, so it feels a little more like last year's game... but hey, we gave that a five-star review.

Otherwise, this year's tweaks are perhaps more subtle than usual but this general tune-up is still welcome. It may well make it more frustrating, but also more rewarding when things click.

And by the time you do master it, it'll be time to do it all over again.

On the 20th anniversary of the franchise, *PES 2016* has stuck very firmly to its strengths – namely, goals. Nil-nil draws are the stuff of legend, while world-class strikes from West Glamorgan City (who you might think look a lot like Swansea) are commonplace. For the first time in ages, this makes it a genuine arcade-style alternative to *FIFA*'s simulator-esque charms.

Passing is fluid and razor sharp, encouraging creative, instinctive, attacking football – through-balls are particularly lethal and, unlike *FIFA*, it urges you to go for goal at every opportunity.

Defenders will infuriate and beguile you in equal measure, dribbling past three players in one movement before completely mistiming a header the next. Keeping a clean sheet is damn near impossible, but thankfully, so is getting booked or sent off. The slide tackle is more satisfying than ever, partly thanks to a reworked collision system, but

also because the referees are more lenient than Howard Webb at Old Trafford.

Each player is a unique specimen, meaning organising your team for an online match, or a world-beating side in Master League, feels not just important, but essential. I found myself entranced by the depth of the game's career mode.

Sure, it's irritating that you have to rename teams (unless you choose sides in La Liga, for instance, with whom *PES* has a licensing agreement), but online games are just as captivating as their offline counterparts. The game's matchmaking system also does an admirable job of finding a suitable partner.

Much like the real thing, then, *PES 2016* is a game of two halves. Licensing issues and defensive frailties mean it doesn't quite deliver the entire package. But the spirit of the game is here in spades, and just like it did in its heyday, *Pro Evo* places that spectacle above all else.

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

A touch more challenging, but more rewarding to those who persevere

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

Purists may scoff, but for thrillseekers and goal addicts, *PES* keeps hitting the target



App:roved

FOR
KEEPING
SCORE

● Onefootball

The season's in full swing, but you can't always be there for your team, or revel in the misfortune of your rivals. On such occasions, Onefootball's worth having installed. The app enables you to follow leagues worldwide and get news on your favourite clubs. The best bit, though, is the live scores. These are especially great when using the Apple Watch extension, a light tap on your wrist alerting you to a goal – well, great if your team's not getting a kicking.

Stuff says ★★★★★
US\$free / Android, iOS,
Windows Phone



FOR
FINGER
DRIVING

● Horizon Chase

A love letter to old-school arcade racers, *Horizon Chase* funnels the best bits of *Lotus* (Amiga) and *Top Gear* (SNES) into a thoroughly modern touchscreen adrenaline rush. It's fast and vibrant, as you repeatedly battle from the back of the pack to win races and earn the points required to unlock new locations. Assuming you're not dead inside, you'll be glued to your iPhone, revelling in the richness of the game, and wondering why this kind of racer isn't more commonplace.

Stuff says ★★★★★
US\$2.99 / iOS



FOR
FLYING
FANCY

● Piloteer

Not the best game to install if you're easily annoyed, *Piloteer* finds Jane attempting to fly about on a jetpack that appears to have all the grace and usability of a ZX80. But persevere and you'll gain a modicum of control to complete challenges, only ending up in a bone-crunching heap every nine tries out of ten. Lovely Gilliam-esque graphics and amusingly rag-doll physics should just about stop you hurling your device at a wall after yet another crash.

Stuff says ★★★★★
US\$0.99 / Android, iOS

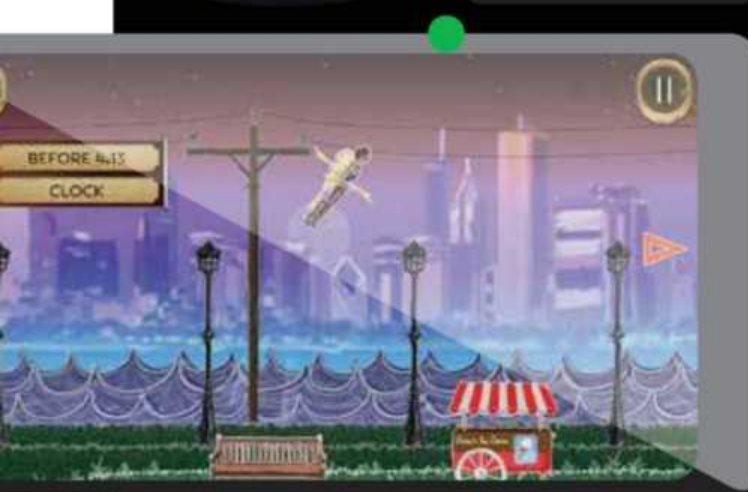


FOR
DASHING
DISPLAYS

● Status Board

If your iPad spends much of its life on your desk, a blank screen staring into space, check out Status Board. The app lets you create custom status displays from a range of widgets, bringing meaning to your otherwise dormant tablet. Individuals can add clocks, photos, calendars, and feeds for email, news and Twitter. Business types can include all manner of graphs, countdown timers and tables, and even output the lot to an HD telly via the magic of HDMI.

Stuff says ★★★★★
from US\$free / iPad



Mini meme



ROLICKING RETRO REMAKES

Pac-Man has been reworked for a new generation, but it isn't the only superb mobile game infused with the pixel-rich lifeblood of arcade classics



● Drop Wizard

Harking back to classic single-screen Taito platformers such as *Bubble Bobble*, *Drop Wizard* is also part auto-runner. You sprint left and right, blasting magic when you land, and punt dazed monsters about the place on colliding with them. It's adorable, but there's a sting in its tail with the vicious boss battles.

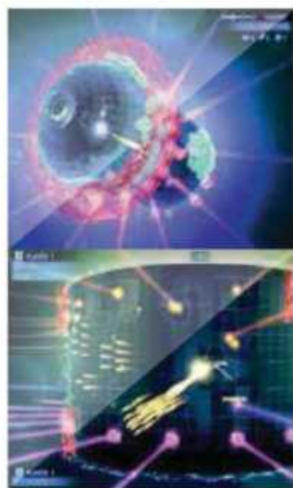
Stuff says ★★★★★
US\$1.99 / iOS



● Pac-Man 256

Crossy Road's devs successfully rethought *Frogger* and now they bring their smarts to the dot-munching maze-wanderer. He finds himself beyond the glitch in the infamous 255th level, simultaneously outrunning digital oblivion and his ghostly foes. This time at least, he has power-ups beyond pills, including a spectre-frying laser.

Stuff says ★★★★★
US\$free / Android, iOS



● Geometry Wars 3: Dimensions Evolved

Few twin-stick shooters evoke the same sense of danger, panic, claustrophobia and excitement as 1982's masterful *Robotron*. *Geometry Wars 3* does. This is a gorgeous, intense, thrilling shooter, which tests your thumbs to the limits across a range of tiny 3D worlds full of vibrant nasties to destroy.

Stuff says ★★★★★
US\$9.99 / Android, iOS



● Panzerkampf 3

Battlezone in 1980 was one of the earliest first-person 3D shooters, finding you trundling about a sparse landscape, blowing away vector tanks. *Panzerkampf 3* reboots the original, gives it *Daytona*-like arcade racer controls, ramps up the mayhem, speed and destruction, and then sits back, rightfully satisfied.

Stuff says ★★★★★
US\$0.99 / iOS



● Space Invaders Infinity Gene

These days *Space Invaders* looks a bit rubbish, and *Infinity Gene* seemingly agrees, dispensing with the feel of the original. It quickly evolves, flinging staccato set-piece stages at you in a flurry of neon and thumping beats. Before long, you're careening through bullet hell, wondering how this got so tough.

Stuff says ★★★★★
US\$4.99 / Android, iOS



● Forget-Me-Not

Borrowing from *Pac-Man*, *Rogue* and *Wizard Of War*, *Forget-Me-Not* plonks you in procedurally generated destructible arenas to eat flowers, grab a key and make your escape. But every level inevitably descends into a frenzied free-for-all warzone, with tiny pixelated characters blowing anything within range to smithereens.

Stuff says ★★★★★
US\$1.99 / Android, iOS

Media hoard

Here are some nice new things to tempt you into the warm and great indoors – including Mexican drug lords, a populated Moon and a massive Indominus Rex

WATCH

Sicario_cinema

After excelling in the art of knocking down American doors, no-nonsense FBI agent Kate Macer (Emily Blunt) is hand-picked for a special mission in Mexico: chop the head off a drug cartel that's leaving bodies stuffed into the walls of suburban houses across the border in the US.

Led by the shifty pairing of Matt (Josh Brolin) and Alejandro (Benicio Del Toro), a committed subscriber to the idea that actions speak louder than words, Kate finds herself questioning the whole endeavour after bullets start flying in a traffic jam on the way home from a dubious bust.

Unable to get a straight answer about, well, anything – particularly Alejandro's mission and motives – she soon becomes something of

a lone wolf, save for help from her partner, the excellent Daniel Kaluuya of *Black Mirror* fame.

Thanks to the CallofDutification of Hollywood blockbusters, we frequently see *Sicario* (meaning hitman) through the eyes of a drone or a pair of thermal imaging goggles, making the vast expanses of wilderness look positively extra-terrestrial – but the film's far from inhuman.

Comparisons will be made with *Zero Dark Thirty* as a taut, thrilling blockbuster: one that mixes the streamlined storytelling of a TV episode with the full-on cinematic tension and blood-pumping set pieces of Michael Mann at his best.

Tom Wiggins

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



Jurassic World

_Blu-ray, DVD, VOD

If you're a fan of the original trilogy, you won't be disappointed – world-class CGI means that our favourite dinosaurs are back and better than ever. Chris Pratt is a prehistoric Ace Ventura, leading from the front against the rogue attraction: the Indominus Rex. But Bryce Dallas Howard outrunning a T-Rex, in heels? Seriously? Kyle Pittman

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



Mad Max: Fury Road

_Blu-ray, DVD, VOD

You could fit the entire plot on the back of a microSD card – Tom Hardy basically grunts for two hours – but that doesn't matter when the dystopian desert world Max and his entourage barrel through has been so flawlessly realised. *Fury Road* is a journey you can just strap in for and wait for it to blow your head off. Tom Wiggins

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★

LISTEN



Every Open Eye

_Chvrches

You could have seen this coming: that after the surprising chart impact of the first album, Chvrches would go full-on pop.

There's nothing wrong with pop, but what made *The Bones Of What You Believe* so enjoyable was that the poppy hooks combined with a certain fatalism and bite. That bite isn't as sharp here.

Not that *Every Open Eye* is bad: opener *Never Ending Circles* kicks things

off like an explosion in a confetti shop and *Clearest Blue*'s raucous crescendo will be a crowd-thriller at live shows. However, as the album progresses you keep waiting for something with more depth.

There's little doubt that *Every Open Eye* will see commercial success; but I wish it didn't feel as if that was the biggest priority.

Tom Parsons

STUFF SAYS ★★★☆☆



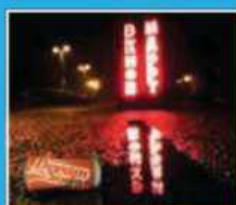
Grey Tickles, Black Pressure

_John Grant

John Grant sure knows how to write a tune. There are some harsher metallic arrangements here, but he doesn't compromise on catchiness. There's nothing as loveable as *GMF* (though the title track comes close), but anyone who enjoys meticulous orchestration, abrasive wit and a ladle of filth will like this.

Will Findlater

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



Dream Soda

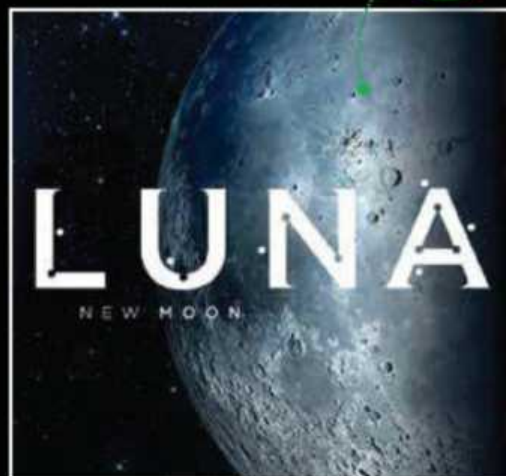
_Demob Happy

The Brighton four-piece borrow a little too liberally from Josh Homme's wheelie bin of unused riffs, particularly on *Junk DNA* and *Man You're Wrong*, but there are far worse places to look for inspiration (they find more on *Summer Cash In* and the title track). If Royal Blood can do it, there's no reason why Demob Happy can't.

Tom Wiggins

STUFF SAYS ★★★☆☆

READ



Luna: New Moon

_Ian McDonald

If a good chunk of Ian McDonald's success thus far has been taking sci-fi to unexpected places – Brazil, India, Turkey – then this one has its work cut out. We're more likely to have experienced some form of narrative about the Moon already.

"The Moon knows a thousand ways to kill you" is repeated throughout, but more of a threat than vacuum are the warring families vying to dominate

its mineral wealth. As ever, McDonald spares no details about the grubby, violent and sexy ways that people gain from each other.

But, for all its complex characters, multicultural influences and near-future tech, *Luna: New Moon* left me slightly cold. There's a second volume on the way; perhaps it will be a little less businesslike.

Fraser Macdonald

STUFF SAYS ★★★☆☆



The Making Of 2001: A Space Odyssey

_Piers Bronzy

Made to look like the mysterious monolith seen in Kubrick's sci-fi classic, this book is big on pictures – which is handy as it can be a little unwieldy to read, particularly the pages that fold out to reveal on-set snaps or pre-production sketches. The insight here is all-encompassing.

Tom Wiggins

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



The Lego Architect

_Tom Alphin

Fancy building the Royal Albert Hall? This book will show you how, with instructions for different architectural styles all using the medium of those famous plastic bricks. Its academic prose may feel off-putting, but thanks to the enlightening photos it will make an awesome gift for creative sorts.

Robert Leedham

STUFF SAYS ★★★★★



PLAYLIST

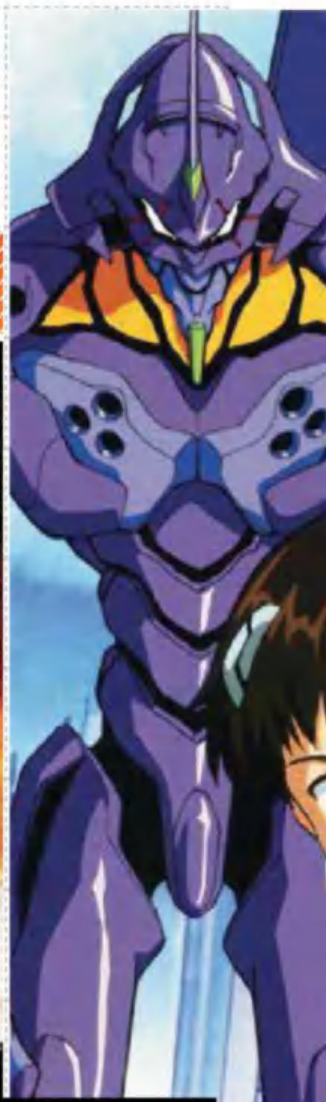
ANIME

Finished all your Nordic noir and Californian comedy? It's time to visit the strange world of Japanese anime – a place that's had more than a minor influence on western telly

**Attack On Titan**

Imagine *Band Of Brothers* but replace Nazis with grinning behemoths that feast on human flesh, and you get this bleak but compelling show. It explores the horrors of war through the eyes of three young cadets trying to liberate mankind from their oppressors. Not for the easily spooked.

Netflix, Amazon
Instant Video

**Mushi-Shi**

It might be the most subdued anime here, but it's still one of the best. Each episode is an allegorical vignette of the lives of ordinary Japanese people in the 19th century and their encounters with supernatural creatures known as Mushi. Its atmosphere of calm and contemplation is strangely soothing.

Netflix,
crunchyroll.com

**Berserk**

One for those who enjoy intricate character studies. Oh, and enough blood to make *Kill Bill* look like a Victorian tea party. Based on the '90s manga series, *Berserk* is reminiscent of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* – it's a slow burner that gently pulls you towards its inexorable conclusion.

amazon.com

**Cowboy Bebop**

If you're only going to watch one show on this list, make it this. Consistently lauded as the greatest anime of all time, it sees director Shinichiro Watanabe overlay his wild-west-in-space drama with a mighty jazz soundtrack. You'll wonder how you ever lived without space battles accompanied by piano improv.

amazon.com

**Puella Magi Madoka Magica**

Typical 'magical girl' anime is airy with glitzy transformation scenes and hyperbolic villainy. This turns the subgenre on its head. Don't let their sweeter-than-thou appearance fool you: this story of five girls and their battle with malevolent beings known as witches is a Faustian tragedy.

amazon.com

**Ghost In The Shell: Stand Alone Complex**

The original inspired *The Matrix* and took cyberpunk to new artistic levels. This is a future where humans can transfer their consciousness to machines; the digital world is as dangerous as reality. One of sci-fi's most skilfully realised universes.

Netflix, Amazon
Instant Video

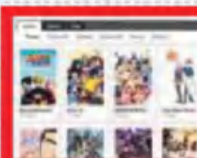
**Neon Genesis Evangelion**

The 'mecha' genre (giant robots having massive fights) may have inspired the *Transformer* films, but its manga and anime originators are a far superior breed. This show, with humanoid robots and prodigy pilots, oozes intellect.

animemegastore.co.uk



DRAWING CONCLUSIONS HOW TO WATCH ANIME



GO OFF PISTE

If you can't find the anime you're after on the likes of Netflix, head to crunchyroll.com or animaxtv.co.uk – they have hundreds of shows available to stream and, if you don't mind the adverts, will let you devour all your heart desires for free.



SUB, DON'T DUB

The one thing most likely to ruin your first anime experience is bad dubbing. In general, the English dubs for anime are utterly atrocious. Never judge an anime you've watched dubbed before you've switched to subtitles, restored the original audio and tried again.



BE ADVENTUROUS

It's tempting to replicate your taste in live action when exploring anime, but there are many anime-specific genres that might tickle your tastebuds. 'Mecha' is all about giant robots, while 'slice of life' is more character-driven.



Kill La Kill

Ostentatious, dripping in parody, and it has quite rightly been dubbed insane, but a couple of years ago the only name on any anime fan's lips was *Kill La Kill*. Why? It blends the 'faster, better, stronger' structure of 'shonen' anime with tropes from the magical girl genre, with bizarre and compelling results. Netflix



Gintama

This comedy has run for hundreds of episodes. How has it lasted so long? By being terribly funny, and terribly weird. It follows Gintoki, a samurai in Edo period Japan (which is overtaken by aliens), trying to pay the rent by doing odd jobs. It's a masterclass in comic timing. crunchyroll.com



Paranoia Agent

Unconnected people are being murdered by a figure known only as Shonen Bat and there are weird happenings in Tokyo. This 'magical realism' anime has a page-turning plot, but the show's purpose is to explore the psychological innards of its cast, splattered across the screen in a wonderfully abstract fashion. Unmissable. amazon.com



Steins;Gate

This time-travel drama sees a self-professed mad scientist and his team scramble between different times, resulting in brain-mangling plotlines. Its magic lies in its multiple layers, with seamless transitions between light and dark moods. It's also hard not to fall in love with the cast. Netflix, Amazon Instant Video

SUPER
GEEK

LEGO

Bricks magazine editor Mark Guest reveals how Lego became a pop cultural phenomenon, and why it's no longer just little kids who are clicking for joy

According to the webcomic *XKCD*, the population of Lego mini-figures will overtake that of humans by 2019. That's an incredible (and, for Legophobes, terrifying) rise from the plastic brick's humble origins in 1958. Back then it was seen as a kids' construction toy. But then came the internet, and suddenly a new breed of enthusiasts known as AFOLs (adult fans of Lego) took it to new levels of complexity.

I left my passion for Lego behind in my late teens but, like so many AFOLs, found myself

drawn back in with the release of the *Lego Star Wars* sets in 1999. After building the likes of the Super Star Destroyer (all 3000 pieces of it), I started imagining how I could make scenes out of exciting ranges such as the *Lone Ranger* sets.

With every new annual Lego release list, the choices get wider. More and more sets are breaking the US\$150 barrier, piece numbers are increasing, and some even come with display plaques and stands. Last year's Batman Tumbler vehicle from *The Dark Knight* (came in the

now not-so-rare category of 'ages 16+').

Not that it's all about locking yourself away to puzzle over the next brick-based challenge. These days, Lego shows are a regular fixture in exhibition halls. The big one this year is Brick (brickshowsive.com), which will see giant, fan-built worlds for the likes of *Tomb Raider* and world record attempts at the NEC and London's ExCeL in October and December respectively.

For real Lego disciples, the holy land is Lego's HQ in Billund, Denmark. Its official 'Inside Tour'

tickets cost US\$2160 per person and usually sell out within five minutes. But for a sense of Lego history and a family trip that you can claim is just for the kids, Denmark's Legoland is also well worth a visit.

If you want to get involved from home, the Lego Ambassador Network (lan.lego.com) will show events and groups near you. And Lego Ideas (ideas.lego.com) is a brilliant new platform for user-submitted designs that occasionally get turned into real sets. Fingers crossed for the International Space Station...

JARGON
BUSTER

■ SNOT

If you're finding standard Lego bricks restrictive, 'Studs Not On Top' pieces let you branch out by including studs on the sides for the creation of more complex builds like curved walls.

■ CHEESE SLOPE

Officially known as part number 50746, this handy wedge-shaped brick has a 33° slope and is one stud square, making it ideal for adding fine details such as roof tiles.

■ LUG

'Lego User Groups' are local or regional clubs that organise real-world meets at events like Lego exhibitions. If you can't find one nearby, you can apply to create your own.

■ GREEBLING

The practice of adding believable mechanical details like engines and cockpits to enhance the appearance of a Lego creation. It's mostly seen in Lego Space and Mecha builds.



TEMPLE OF AIRJITZU

Even if you haven't exactly been glued to the *Ninjago* TV series, the theme's new flagship set looks destined to be a Lego classic for all ages. For older collectors, the village has a few tricky build techniques and dozens of neat touches like the bridge and spinning shadow theatre. But there's also lots of playability for kids and the generous inclusion of 12 minifigures, including six ninjas. This alone guarantees its inclusion on lots of people's Christmas lists; and with over 2000 pieces, it's a serious building project that could stretch well into the new year.

US\$200 / lego.com

FUTURE
CLASSIC

HAUNTED HOUSE

It might sound unfair to call a set released in 2012 'retro', but the Haunted House was part of a very short-lived theme called *Monster Fighters* that was on shelves for only 10 months. The theme's sets have shown a tendency to appreciate in value and this one's scale and level of detail (plus its glow-in-the-dark ghosts) make it very desirable for collectors. It has many playable features but the real AFOL appeal is its ability to fit within the modular town range – and all those lovely sand green bricks. To find a 'brand new in box' one now for under US\$400 would be considered a good find.

from US\$400 / ebay.com

RETRO
TREASURE



SLAVE 1

This iconic craft from the *Star Wars* universe has been released in set form four times before, but never at this scale. The 45cm-long ship is part of Lego's Ultimate Collector Series (UCS), which means it comes with a display stand and a staggering level of detail. This includes a carbonite-imprisoned Han Solo for storing in the cargo hold, a rotating cockpit, stacks of hidden guns and missiles for hunting fugitives and a new, ornate Boba Fett minifigure. Older UCS sets like the 2008 Death Star or last year's Sandcrawler might be more tempting, but this is an essential piece for any collector's library.

US\$200 / lego.com

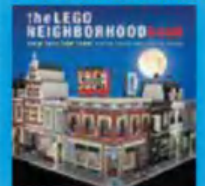
SCI-FI
INNOVATOR

BUILDING BLOCKS

BRICKSET
YOUR LEGO SET GUIDE

THE WEBSITE BRICKSET

An encyclopaedic reference for all levels of collectors, Brickset is the biggest and best unofficial Lego news site. Beyond its news feed, user-generated reviews and forums, there's an automated Amazon 'bot that tells you which sets have been discounted by 25% or more – handy for last-minute gifts or bargain-hunting. brickset.com



THE BOOK THE LEGO NEIGHBORHOOD BOOK

Got a decent-sized spare room and a penchant for urban planning? This guide to building your own Lego town includes instructions for creating multi-storey buildings as well as ideas for interior design. See also the inspirational *The Lego Architect*, reviewed on page 55.

US\$15 / amazon.co



THE DOCUMENTARY THE SECRET WORLD OF LEGO

This insightful (if stage-managed) peek inside Lego's HQ reveals the brick-making process and cult-like atmosphere. The shadowing of a UK design student who's looking to land his dream job adds a compelling narrative to a film that could have only scratched the plastic surface. channel4.com



5-MINUTE HACKS

IF NOTHING ELSE, AT LEAST...

1 GIVE YOUR MAC BLUETOOTH SURROUND SOUND

Use this trick from Otone Audio (otoneaudio.co.uk) to play audio from your Mac to three wireless speakers at once:

1. On your Mac (which needs at least OS X 10.10) open System Preferences and click 'Bluetooth'. Turn on your three Bluetooth speakers and press 'pair'.

2. Once connected, select the 'Go' menu in Finder and find 'Audio MIDI Setup' in 'Utilities'. Click the '+' icon in the bottom left, select 'Create Multi-Output Device' and click on the speakers.

3. To choose left, centre and right channels click the dropdown menu next to 'Multi-Output Device' and turn the unwanted channel to zero. Back in System Preferences, click 'Sound' and select 'Multi-Output Device'. Let there be rock.

2 LISTEN TO GIGS BEFORE THEY HAPPEN

Fancy a taster of the live music that's happening in nearby venues this week? This site mashes up Google Maps, Songkick and Soundcloud:

Head to gigbloc.com and click on 'current location' or, if you want to find gigs near that work event in an obscure suburb, zoom into that part of the map.

Choose your date then click on a venue. You'll now hear a Soundcloud stream of the artist who's playing there, with an option to buy tickets for the show from Songkick.

If you've bought tickets, click the '+' icon to add the gig to your Google Calendar. And when you discover that it clashes with your Gran's 80th birthday party, head to twickets.co.uk to sell them.



2



3

3 STALK YOUR LOCAL SONGBIRDS

Serious twitchers may sneer, but these 'Shazam for birdsong' apps promise to automatically identify feathered friends in your garden:

Download Warblr (US\$6, iOS) or **ChirpOMatic** (US\$3, iOS). Both apps can identify the birdsong found in our gardens and woods. ChirpOMatic also works offline.

When you hear birdsong, hold up your phone and start recording. After 10–12 seconds, the apps will give you a list of possible matches with images to help you tell your chaffinch from your bullfinch.

If you don't want to distract the local feathered choir, press the 'bird-safe' button on ChirpOMatic before playing back recordings. They will now play through your iPhone's earpiece, allowing that blackbird to continue chirruping the *Little Wing* solo in peace.



1

TUNE IN NEXT MONTH TO...

- Learn to design your own iOS app
- Rediscover the joys of board games
- Get stuck into our pick of the best audiobooks



AND THE AWARD GOES TO...

If you visited GITEX Technology Week last month you would have no doubt seen the GITEX Hot Stuff Awards stand displaying the very best in tech that 2015 had to offer as decided by our expert panel of Stuff and GITEX judges. But with 18 hotly contested categories on the line, there could only be one overall winner - well two, we also let you vote on your favourite gadget of the year as well - so without further ado, the winning gadgets are...



Gadget of the Year
LG 65EG960T



Popular Choice Award Winner
IO HAWK

For the full list of winners visit stuffmideast.com/gitex

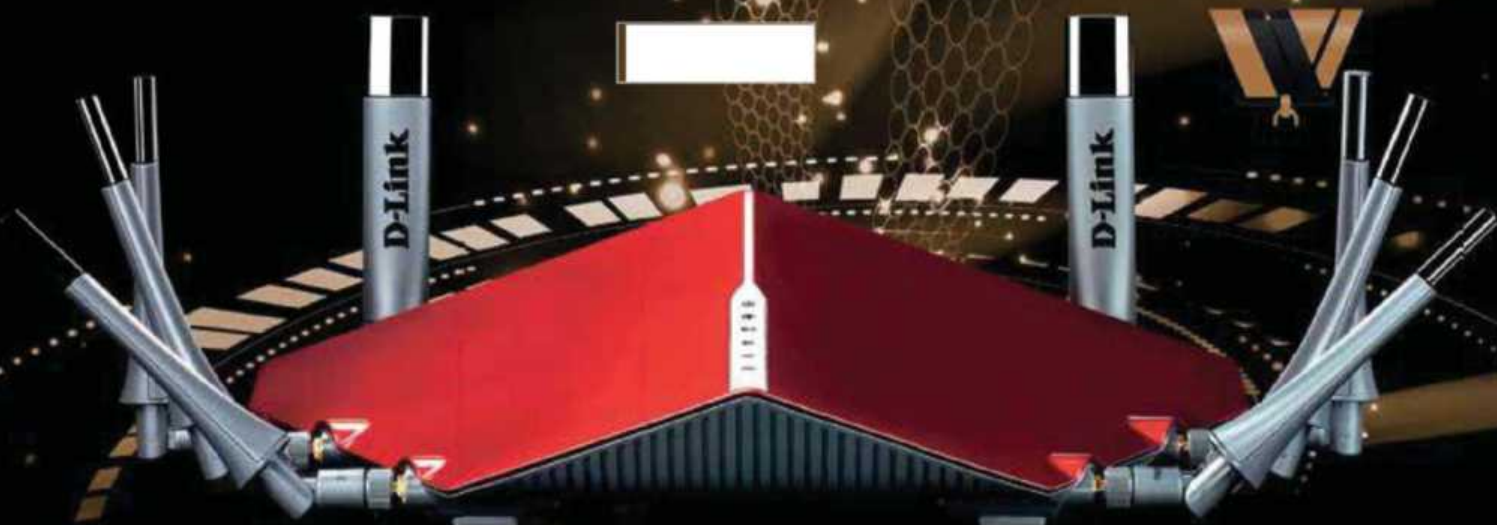
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D-Link®

Wireless AC5300

ULTRA PERFORMANCE SERIES



AC ULTRA WI-FI ROUTER



ULTRA-FAST SPEEDS

MORE SPEED

For uncompromised HD Video Streaming and Online Gaming on each and every connected device in your home.

MORE WI-FI COVERAGE

For a strong signal on all your connected devices anywhere in and around your home.

MORE POWER

To handle the growing number of devices connected to your Wi-Fi network.



AC5300 MU-MIMO

Tri-Band Wi-Fi
DIR-895L



AC3200 MIMO

Tri-Band Wi-Fi
DIR-890L



AC3150 MU-MIMO

4 x 4 MU-MIMO Wi-Fi
DIR-885L

GET YOURS NOW



TRI-BAND
Wi-Fi



1.4 GHz DUAL CORE
PROCESSOR



MU-MIMO
READY



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COVERAGE



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HOT BUY 1		Samsung Galaxy S6 This is a new era for Samsung, with a smart upgrade that fixes not just things that were amiss in the Galaxy S5, but things that have plagued them for years. No plastic here: its front and back are super-tough Gorilla Glass 4, its sides aluminium. In terms of ergonomics and speaker quality, HTC still wins, but only just. And in the more important areas of camera performance, screen tech and raw power, the Galaxy S6 tramples its rival. We just wish it had a microSD slot.	STUFF SAYS Samsung has proven its critics wrong – the Galaxy S6 is the new benchmark for flagship phones from US\$700 ★★★★★
NEW 2		Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge+ The Edge+ is a larger version of the curvy S6 Edge that wowed us earlier this year; its extra chunk of screen and camera are terrific, while it's also technologically superior to almost everything out there. For a money-no-object phone, it's an absolute corker.	from US\$820 ★★★★★ BEST FOR CUTTING-EDGE GADGETEERS
3		LG G4 The leather-clad LG G4 is a treat for those who want something that looks and feels a bit different. Its camera is incredibly powerful, giving you almost as much control as a DSLR, and the large screen is brilliant... but the battery life holds it back from the top.	US\$760 ★★★★★
NEW 4		Apple iPhone 6s "Everything's changed" is pushing it, but within the 6s's familiar body lies a surprising amount of innovation. You'll really notice the A9 processor's added speed, the 12MP camera's scope and quality, and of course, the time-saving delight that is 3D Touch.	from US\$650 ★★★★★
NEW 5		OnePlus 2 The second OnePlus phone massively undercuts the big names with performance, software and battery life that far exceed some of the \$600-odd competition. The only thing that might put you off is simply how much of a pain the OnePlus 2 is to get hold of.	from US\$570 ★★★★★
6		HTC One M9+ Having been beaten by the S6, the M9+ is the step forward that perhaps the M9 should have been. With a bigger, more pixel-packed screen and a fingerprint scanner it's welcome at the next-gen superphone party, and it's dressed just as smartly as before.	US\$710 ★★★★★
NEW 7		Sony Xperia Z5 Do a higher-megapixel camera and neat fingerprint scanner revitalise this Sony? Nearly but not quite. This is a very good and attractive phone, but its price seems steep when it has no killer feature to offer over other Android kings.	US\$680 ★★★★★☆
NEW 8		Apple iPhone 6s Plus The iPhone 6s Plus provides an expansive, immersive experience thanks to its giant screen. But many will find it too cumbersome, which defeats the purpose of those brilliant OIS and Live Photos camera features, and the 6s is clearly the faster phone.	from US\$750 ★★★★★☆
NEW 9		Motorola Moto G (2015) The third-gen model takes everything we loved about the previous Moto Gs, sidesteps the performance issues and adds in a great camera and waterproofing to finish off the package. However, the price hike means it's not quite as bargain as before.	US\$180 ★★★★★☆
10		Google Nexus 5 Delivering top-end spec at a mid-range price, the new Nexus has a bigger 4.95in screen, faster processor and a satisfactory 8MP snapper. But the biggest improvement is its chocolatey-smooth Android KitKat 4.4 OS. Astounding value.	from US\$480 ★★★★★ BEST FOR PRICE TAG

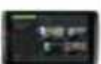
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HOT BUY	1		Apple iPad Air 2 The iPad Air didn't really need to be thinner, but that doesn't mean 6.1mm isn't mighty impressive. This combines with reassuring weight and impeccable build quality to make this the most desirable tab on the planet. While the display is the same Retina resolution as before, clever screen tech brings the pixels closer to the surface, and the whole experience is even faster than before thanks to the new A8X chip. Basically it's the best tablet in the world made even better.	STUFF SAYS Thinner, lighter and mightier: Apple's iron-fisted reign at the top of the tablet charts continues unabated from US\$500 ★★★★★	
NEW	2		Apple iPad Mini 4 This is the mini tab we've been waiting for. It's 1.4mm thinner and 32g lighter, just the right size for a great portable entertainment hub, and subtle display tweaks will do justice to games and graphic novels alike. Plus it will easily last three days on a charge.	from US\$400 ★★★★★	
	3		Sony Xperia Z4 Tablet Sony have added a keyboard to this already stunning tab, so now it's handy for work as well as play, just like a Windows hybrid. Superb battery life, plenty of power, a slim body and super-vivid screen make this the best Android alternative to an iPad Air 2.	from US\$700 ★★★★★	
NEW	4		Samsung Galaxy Tab S2 9.7 Slimmer and faster, with a brilliant screen and serious stamina, the Galaxy Tab S2 sees Samsung back in the running for the Android throne. The Xperia Z4 just pips it with its bundled keyboard, but the S2's a versatile, big-screen tab first and foremost.	US\$495 ★★★★★	BEST FOR MAGAZINES AND MOVIES
	5		Microsoft Surface Pro 3 At last, Microsoft has delivered on the promise of the tablet-cum-laptop hybrid. It proves there's space in the world for a design that's more productive than an iPad or Galaxy Note, but easier to hump around than a traditional laptop.	from US\$800 ★★★★★	BEST FOR USING ANYWHERE
NEW	6		Asus Transformer Book T100 Chi While it may sit in the middle of 10in hybrid range on price, the Transformer Book T100 Chi is classier than the average tablet. Improvements to design, screen and keyboard quality make it a neat choice if you don't mind working with a small screen.	US\$400 ★★★★★	
	7		Google Nexus 9 The design isn't as pristine, but this is a real Android contender to rival the iPads. You get the new Android 5.0 Lollipop software, bags of power and a super-sharp display. With 12 hours of video play and two front-facing speakers, it'll be a great film buddy.	US\$400 ★★★★★	
NEW	8		Sony Xperia Z3 Tablet Compact A slim, light and reliable couch or commute companion, with a screen that looks brilliant despite being 'only' Full HD. The waterproofing may sway people away from choosing an iPad Mini and every gamer's eyes will light up at the mention of PS4 Remote Play.	US\$430 ★★★★★☆	
NEW	9		Microsoft Surface 3 Microsoft finally nailed the hybrid formula with the Surface Pro 3, and now it's translated it to this: a smart, ultra-portable design with the benefits of full Windows 8.1. It's easily the best affordable Surface yet. Just make sure you buy the keyboard.	US\$480 ★★★★★☆	
	10		Nvidia Shield Tablet This really is the ultimate gaming tablet. The Shield's sheer power and gaming smarts are incredible, with a console-quality controller and the option of seamless streaming from your PC. All it needs now is more made-for-Shield games...lots more.	US\$300 ★★★★★☆	BEST FOR GAMING ON THE GO

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HOT BUY 1		LG 65EG960T We knew that one day OLED and 4K would be joined in matrimony, and that the results would be rather special. That day is now upon us and 'special' doesn't quite do it justice. The 65in LG is the new pinnacle of TV tech and performance, combining the unbelievable colours, contrast and brightness of OLED with the super-sharp, ultra-detailed images of 4K to create a picture that's more real and enticing than looking out of the window.	STUFF SAYS It's might pricey, but if you're after the finest flatscreen known to man, this is currently it. US\$13,600 ★★★★★
2		LG 55EC930T Not everyone's got \$13,000 to blow on a flatscreen, and if you have to choose between OLED and 4K it's OLED we'd take right now. The awesome colours, super-deep blacks and amazing contrast will make everything you already watch look extra-amazing.	US\$2,900 ★★★★★
3		Samsung UE65JU7000 If you're going to go 4K, best do it big. Samsung's latest 65in Ultra HD offering is a beauty with the screen on or off, and the open-source Tizen UI is very snazzy. The processor and inputs are still in a separate little unit than can be upgraded in the future.	US\$4,300 ★★★★★
4		Samsung UE55JS8000 Each of its 8.3million pixels is put to good use, filling the screen's handsome real estate with pin-sharp outlines, potent contrast and eye-popping colours. Sound-wise, it's way more powerful than bog-standard flatscreens. Worth the pretty penny? Oh yes.	US\$4,100 ★★★★★
5		Sony KDL-50W800B 4K a bit too new-fangled (or pricey) for you? How about a 50in edge-lit LED LCD with all of Sony's smart features for well under a grand? It's not even like picture quality's been sacrificed – this is an absolute corker of a telly in every way.	US\$700 ★★★★★
6		LG 55UF950T This telly comes to life in a flash, and menus don't waste time loading – it's a glossy double-page advert for pixel-packing 4K technology. The punchy palette revels in dazzling hues, deep blacks and Essex-smile whites, and the sound is solid.	US\$1,900 ★★★★★☆
7		Sony KDL-32W700B There's nothing wrong with sticking with a smaller TV, but you should still make sure you pick a good 'un. This 32in Sony is the best, in terms of both picture performance and features, which include 1080p resolution and all the smart stuff you can handle.	US\$450 ★★★★★☆
8		Sony KD-55X8500B If you want to jump on the 4K bandwagon with Sony you could go for the wedge-shaped X9, which is great, but we'd suggest that this slimmer, less intrusive 'entry-level' 55-incher is an even better buy. It's still got all the smart stuff and great performance.	US\$2,000 ★★★★★☆
9		LG 55LA860W From its super-slim, near bezel-less design to its excellent picture and clever, app-stuffed smart TV hub, the 860W does many things right. Then again, it costs two grand, so it damn well should do. If you've got deep pockets, you could do a lot worse.	US\$3,000 ★★★★★☆
10		Bang & Olufsen BeoVision 11 Five grand for a 40in TV might seem a trifle steep, but if that's small change to you the BeoVision 11 is a luxurious delight of design and 1080p picture quality. It also sounds better than any TV we've ever used, and has a built-in surround processor for adding 5.1.	US\$5,000 ★★★★★☆

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HOT BUY 1		Sonos multiroom system Who needs to drill holes and re-plaster walls to get a multiroom music system? Not you. With Sonos, you can expand your set-up at your leisure – why not start with a budget Play:3, and add a bigger Play:5 later? Then maybe hook up a Connect to your existing hi-fi and router, then add speakers to a Connect:Amp in another room, or a SUB for a bass boost. You'll run out of rooms before you run out of options. For a further upgrade, the Arcam rSeries SonLink DAC works a treat with the Connect.	STUFF SAYS Infinite music in every room without the need for custom installers? Sign us up now, please from US\$750 ★★★★★
2		Naim Mu-so US\$1,400 for a wireless speaker?! Well yes, but what a wireless speaker it is. Naim has ploughed all of its high-end hi-fi experience into delivering a beautifully made, great-sounding device with AirPlay, Spotify Connect and aptX Bluetooth all on-board.	US\$1,400 ★★★★★ BEST FOR ONE-BOX WI-FI HI-FI
3		Monitor Audio Airstream S200 It may look a bit like a floppy skyscraper, but the Monitor Audio's Bluetooth-plus-AirPlay speaker makes a lot of sense, mostly because it takes up very little shelf/desk/table space but makes loads of lovely noise. It's a bit of a steal at £200.	US\$300 ★★★★★
4		Cambridge Audio Go There are loads of very cheap Bluetooth speakers out there, but we reckon it's worth spending that little bit more to get something that's really good – and that's the Go. It sounds awesome, it's really nicely built and its battery lasts a massive 18 hours.	US\$180 ★★★★★ BEST FOR PICNIC PARTIES
5		Bluesound multiroom System Fancy a bit of Sonos-style multiroom but with better-than-CD-quality sound thrown in? You want a Bluesound. There are all-in-one speakers, adapters for your existing hi-fi, and a Vault that rips and stores all your CDs. All can handle high-resolution audio.	from US\$620 ★★★★★
6		Libratone Zipp A fuzzy, cylindrical, colourful Airplay dock that will deliver detailed, punchy 360-degree sound anywhere at all, thanks to a built-in battery that gives it four hours of outdoors life. Direct Wi-Fi skills free you from cables, routers, and everything but the boogie.	US\$505 ★★★★★ BEST FOR AL FRESCO PARTIES
7		Philips Fidelio E5 Setting up a 5.1 home theatre can be a daunting task. Figuring which speakers to pair with which receiver and laying down metres of unsightly cable. This wireless setup from Philips takes the mess out of surround sound, stripping out the clutter.	US\$780 ★★★★★
8		Audio Pro Addon T10 Available in orange, white or black, the Addon T10 is a Bluetooth speaker that also has analogue inputs and a USB socket for charging your MP3 player. Sound-wise it's punchy and deep, with just a little too much bass. It sounds best in orange, obviously.	US\$420 ★★★★★
9		Beats Pill Beats transformed the headphone market, and now they're at it again with portable hi-fi. The Beats Pill impresses with simple controls, slender stylings and solid build. It goes impressively loud for its size, minus the booming base of its headphone counterparts.	US\$200 ★★★★★☆ BEST FOR BLASTING TUNES ON THE GO
10		Sony NWZ-ZX1 The latest Walkman is a premium high-res audio player, and it's the best-sounding portable device we've ever heard: you'll notice parts of songs you never knew were there. We're not so keen on the high price and lack of expandable storage, though.	US\$920 ★★★★★☆

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HOT BUY 1		Apple MacBook Pro 13in (2015) Apple hasn't changed too many parts of the MacBook Pro for 2015. There's a fancy new trackpad and the latest generation of Intel CPUs, which deliver better stamina as well as a chunk more power. This is an incremental upgrade, but given how good the Pro already was, that's more than enough to keep it right at the top of the laptop honours list. If you need power as well as stamina and portability, this is one of the best laptops money can buy.	STUFF SAYS If it ain't broke... it hasn't radically changed, but the Pro's performance and trackpad are top of its class from US\$1,300 ★★★★★
2		Asus ZenBook UX305 Asus knows what it's doing. It knows that the Apple MacBook Air laptops are treading water and the ZenBook UX305 is pretty much everything the 2015 Air should have been, with its fetching aluminium design and as good a display as any US\$1000 laptop.	from US\$1,100 ★★★★★
3		Microsoft Surface Pro 3 At last, Microsoft has delivered on the promise of the tablet-cum-laptop hybrid. It proves there's space in the world for a design that's more productive than an iPad or Galaxy Note, but easier to hump around than a traditional laptop.	from US\$930 (with Type Cover) ★★★★★ BEST FOR USING ANYWHERE
4		Alienware 17 A brute of a machine in every way, the Alienware 17 weighs as much as four MacBook Airs and probably frags harder than 10 of them. Core i7 Haswell processor at 3.4GHz, Nvidia GeForce graphics, up to 32GB of RAM... Our trigger finger's already itching.	from US\$2,150 ★★★★★ BEST FOR SERIOUS GAMERS
5		Apple MacBook (2015) This is no 'Air', nor 'Pro': a clear sign that this is what Apple sees as the future of the ultraportable laptop. And it's certainly very desirable: a 12in lean machine with a superb screen and haptic touchpad. However, the lack of ports can be frustrating.	from US\$1,300 ★★★★★
6		Lenovo Yoga Pro 3 The third entry in the Yoga Pro line refines the laptop/tablet hybrid design with a power-sipping new Intel Core M processor plus slimness and style to make even the MacBook Air look worried. And you can stand it up like a tent. If you want.	US\$1,900 ★★★★★☆
7		Apple MacBook Air 13in (2015) Apple is scraping by with pretty much the same Air design as before. You get a new processor, new connectors and slightly improved battery life, but still no Retina screen. However, if a portable road warrior is what you're after, this is still a great choice.	from US\$1,000 ★★★★★☆
8		Dell XPS 13 Dell's 2015 refresh to its XPS 13 Ultrabook is a revelation. It's practically bezel-less thanks to a 13.3in edge-to-edge "infinity" display that doubles 3200x1800 high resolution touchscreen. We're also totally smitten by the precision trackpad.	US\$1,600 ★★★★★☆
9		Acer Aspire Switch 10 With a 10.1in HD 1280x800 screen, Intel Atom innards, eight hours of battery and compact form factor, this flexible hybrid is for anyone who dreams of MacBook they can pull apart. Excellent for both writing your next novel or watching cat videos on YouTube.	US\$410 ★★★★★☆
10		HP Envy 6 Sleekbook AMD Trinity processors power this Ultrabook alternative, making it cheaper and more battery-filled. The Envy 6 has a quality metal lid and rubberised base, 15.6in screen, and its 6GB RAM gives the 500GB hard drive faster boot times than a similar Intel core i3.	US\$660 ★★★★★☆

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HOT BUY 1		AKG K451 They've actually been around a little while now, but what put the K451 on-ears back on to our radar was an official price drop from US\$220 to US\$130, and a real-world price of just US\$100. For that money they're unbeatable – awesomely agile and punchy sound wrapped up in a subtly stylish and foldable design. Add both standard and three-button control cables for maximising compatibility and there's practically no excuse for not getting brilliant sound.	STUFF SAYS Fantastic sound and great portability at an almost unbeatable price: the perfect PMP upgrade US\$100 ★★★★★	
2		Philips Fidelio M1 MkII Your commute deserves a quality soundtrack, and second-generation Fidelio M1 headphones give you precisely that. There's oodles of detail to the sound and they punch harder than the Hulk. Beats and their ilk can't touch them.	US\$280 ★★★★★	
3		SoundMagic E10S This is actually the third version of SoundMagic's awesome, affordable in-ears – not that you'd tell by looking. They sound even better, though: a little smoother and more refined, with tight, weighty bass. Plus there's now a mic and button for smartphone use.	US\$40 ★★★★★	
4		Sony MDR-EX650AP If you're prepared to pay a little extra for your in-ears, these Sonys are even better than the SoundMagics above. The sound is that bit bigger, a little more detailed and a little more grown-up, and if you don't like the brass finish there's a silver version.	US\$90 ★★★★★	
5		Bose QuietComfort 25 The best kind of silence is the kind you then fill with sweet, sweet music, and that's what the QuietComfort 25s give you. The active noise-cancelling quells office hubbub, air-conditioning and aeroplane hum, and delivers cracking sound in its place.	US\$260 ★★★★★	BEST FOR SHUTTING OUT THE WORLD
6		Sol Republic Master Tracks Really tough things are usually really ugly, which is why the lovely styling of the "virtually indestructible" Master Tracks headphones is so refreshing. Loud, punchy, fast and controlled, the sound is just as attractive as the design. Worth every penny.	US\$200 ★★★★★	
7		Bowers & Wilkins P3 Superb sound and a very solid and achingly stylish design make these the best portable on-ears around. The fact that two cables come in the box – one with a mic and remote for iPhones and one without – only sweetens the already candy floss-like deal.	US\$270 ★★★★★	BEST FOR ON-EAR EXCELLENCE
8		Sennheiser Momentum Black Already known as the on-ears for the dapper man about town, Sennheiser has given its Momentum cans a cool new black and red paintjob. The specs stay the same; expect comfortable cushions and smooth-sounding audio.	US\$440 ★★★★★	BEST FOR QUALITY AND STYLE IN ONE
9		Beats Studio (2013) The original Beats noise-cancellers have been given a refresh, ditching the AAA batteries and getting a cosmetic overhaul. You can expect all the bass Dre's cans are known for and a lot more punchy detail than the old ones. The foldy earcups make them great for travel.	US\$300 ★★★★★	BEST FOR BASE, BUCKETS OF IT
10		Sennheiser CX 680i Light, sweat-resistant and with a clever 'EarFin' to keep them in place, the CX 680i in-ears are the perfect partner for sporty music lovers. They sound impressive, too, and have an in-line mic. Try the PMX 680is (US\$50) if you'd prefer a neckband design.	US\$75 ★★★★★	BEST FOR TUNE-LOVING FITNESS FANS

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- 30-Foot Wireless Range, and Sound on Board as Wired
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SLRs

HOT BUY	1		Olympus OM-D E-M1 The Olympus flagship is armed with the same excellent 16.3MP sensor as its predecessor the E-M5, but has an improved autofocus system, a startlingly good electronic viewfinder and masses of direct controls. Also look out for the E-M10.	US\$1,200 (body only) ★★★★★	
	2		Canon EOS 700D Look, it's a new Canon at No2. No, wait, it's the old one. Actually, it's kind of both. The 700D is a minor upgrade over the 650D, keeping the latter's 18MP sensor, flip-out touchscreen and autofocus during video and adding little beyond a new kit lens. It's still great though.	US\$685 (body only) ★★★★★	BEST FOR ALL-ROUND VALUE
	3		Sony A7R We love this camera. It's light weight but tough and delivers results that outstrip pretty much any other compact system camera on the market. It has a huge full-frame 36.4MP sensor and noise-suppression. Your wallet might weep, but your photo album will sing.	US\$2,300 (body only) ★★★★★	BEST FOR SHOOTING LIKE THE PROS
	4		Nikon D750 It's big and bulky, but otherwise this is one of the most comfortable and intuitive DSLRs money can buy. And with a handy tilt screen and some wireless connectivity features, there's none of the purist snootiness that we saw in the D810.	US\$780 (body only) ★★★★★	
	5		Fujifilm X-T1 There's lots to love about this snapper, from its clever viewfinder and lightning-speed focus to the weatherproof body. One for the analogue lovers, it has actual buttons and dials with no touchscreen. The lack of in-cam image stabilisation is our only complaint.	US\$1,900 (body only) ★★★★★	

COMPACT CAMERAS

HOT BUY	1		Sony DSC-HX60 2014's HX60 isn't a huge departure from its predecessor in terms of its build quality, ease of use, specifications and 30x zoom lens – all of which are excellent. What it does add is NFC and a newer Bionz X processor, making it a slightly nipper performer.	US\$555 ★★★★★	
	2		Fujifilm FinePix X20 The X20 isn't all retro looks and no trousers. It excels in Advanced Auto mode and has manual controls and RAW shooting for creative days. The optical viewfinder, though small, is linked to the 4x zoom and frames well. All this, and it looks damn cool.	US\$460 ★★★★★	
	3		Canon PowerShot S120 Replacing the S110, the S120 is a compact camera for DSLR users on their days off. Its 12.1MP stills, low-light prowess and useful long-exposure modes are welcome, while its slightly laggy lens-ring control and hit-and-miss Wi-Fi features take the shine off.	US\$540 ★★★★★	
	4		Nikon Coolpix AW110 With a metallic body, sturdy locking mechanism and optional camo finish, our new favourite tough cam has got that whole military chic thing nailed. Its army – geddit? – of features include excellent 16MP stills, 1080p@30fps video and glove-friendly controls.	US\$385 ★★★★★	BEST FOR ADVENTUROUS SNAPPERS
	5		Sony DSC-RX100 The 20MP RX100 is just what we're looking for in an advanced compact: pocketable with a huge 1in sensor which serves up great images. After something a bit different? Sony's crazy new lens-without-a-body, the QX100, has much of the same tech.	US\$680 ★★★★★	BEST FOR PORTABLE POWER

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The Shure SM31FH is a wearable headset cardioid condenser microphone especially for fitness and aerobics instructors. It's part of the stage-proven Shure SM microphone family and provides freedom of motion and a secure fit – focus on the workout without wondering if the microphone is going to stay put.

The Shure SM31FH is available as easy-to-operate wireless system or as wired version.



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NEXT BIG THING?



USER-UNFRIENDLINESS

W

ell this doesn't sound too... friendly.

They do say the clue's in the name. User-unfriendliness is a design movement that wants to boot you off your satin-lined throne and down into the harsh, grime-laden streets of the real world. It's driven by products that are intentionally designed to be more tricky to use, with the aim of altering our perceptions and making us think about the way we live our lives and use technology. And no, it's not about your smartwatch nagging you to drink another glass of water, stand up or take the stairs.

This isn't exactly selling it for me...

There's more to it than blindly making your life more difficult. Take designer Weng Xinyu's Angry Lamp, pictured above. It turns itself off if it detects that a room is already bright enough to read in, forcing you to turn it on again... or think about whether you really should. There's also a photo frame that gradually blurs its glass, like a fading memory, until you interact with it – perhaps to reminisce about the time the photo was taken. If being encouraged to remember your tipsy selfie with an Arnie lookalike is wrong, then we don't want to be right.

But I already have a non-annoying lamp and photo frame.

You're missing the point. This is all designed to make you pause and reflect. Consider the Albert clock, a digital timekeeper that makes you work for the time. It displays sums, the answers to which represent the hours and minutes. A little bit of daily mental arithmetic rewards you with the time, while keeping your neurons finely honed. Embrace it – otherwise you'll wake up one day with your USB-powered knife on the blink and no idea how to cut the top off your boiled egg.

[Words Esat Dedezade]

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